

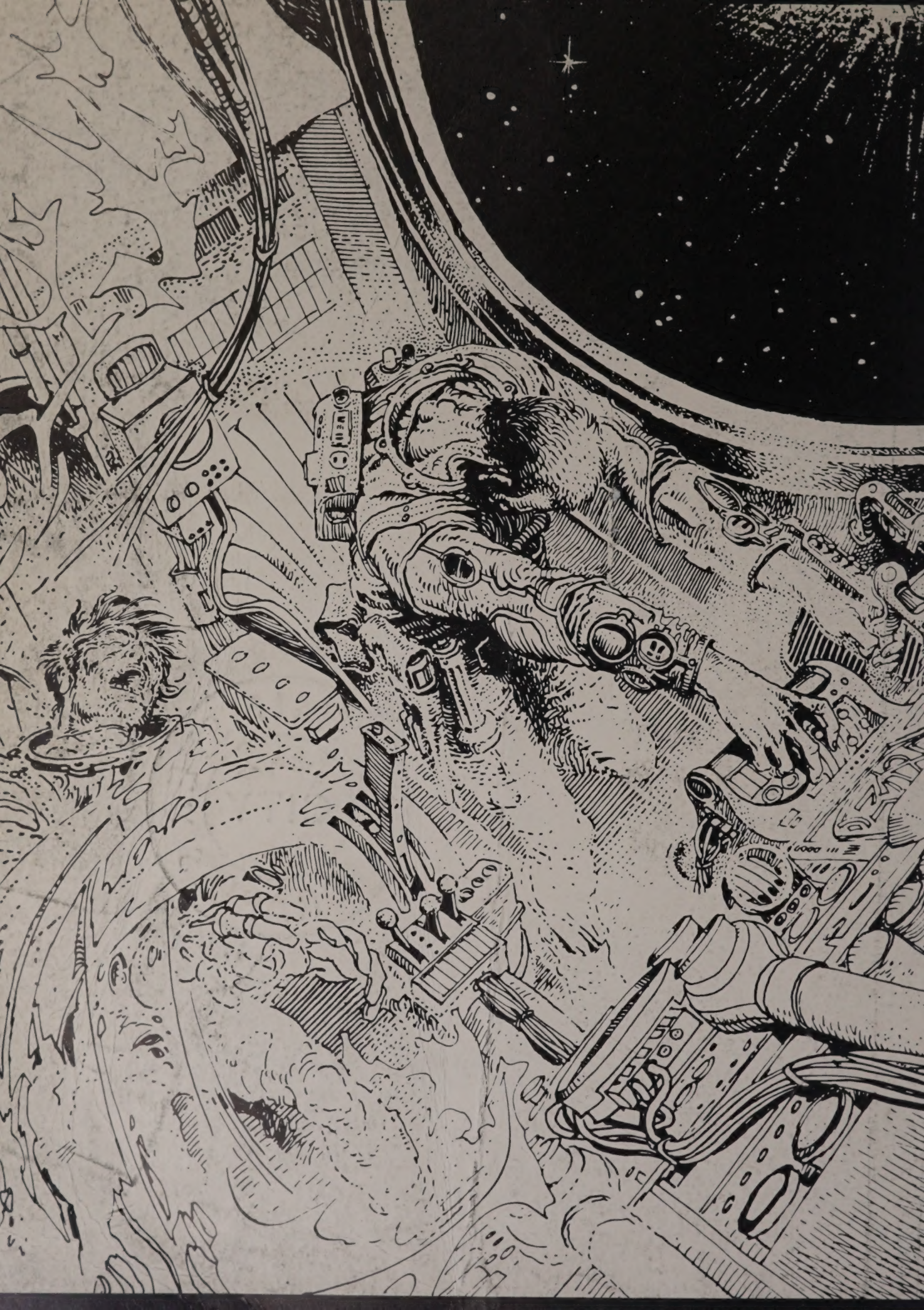
M A S T E R S O F

COMIC BOOK ART



FRANK BELLAMY RICHARD CORBEN ROBERT CRUMB
PHILIPPE DRUILLET WILL EISNER JEAN GIRAUD HARVEY KURTZMAN
VICTOR MOSCOSO BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH WALLACE WOOD

BY P. R. GARRIOCK



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MASTERS OF COMIC BOOK ART

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**WILL EISNER
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JEAN GIRAUD
PHILIPPE DRUILLET
WALLACE WOOD
ROBERT CRUMB
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MASTERS OF COMIC BOOK ART

BY P. R. GARRIOCK

AN AURUM PRESS BOOK



COVER: FRONT: FRANK BELLAMY'S *DAN DARE*. FROM: *EAGLE* (1960)
BACK: JEAN GIRAUD'S COVER PAINTING FOR *MÉTAL HURLANT* 4 (1975)
INSIDE COVER: TWO JEAN GIRAUD ILLUSTRATIONS FROM *GIR* (1974)

MASTERS OF COMIC BOOK ART

The comic book is an instrument of fantasy. A child of modern technology, it has recreated a mythology for our scientific age. Within this medium, ancient heroes are reborn and reinterpreted for the present day. The comic book industry sprang to life with a Herculean figure from outer space who could carry aloft an automobile as he flew through the air. Today's schoolboy may puzzle over what the ancient Greeks saw in their gods, but he has no trouble grasping the reasons for Superman's universal appeal.

The first comic books were simply bound collections of newspaper strips. They were for the most part crudely drawn and had poorly written texts, but the format at least allowed for a whole story rather than a fragment, and the page layout could be more imaginative than in the strips. Then Superman appeared. His story, featured in the first full colour comic book, *Action*, in 1938, had such an immediate and wide appeal that it became the spearhead of a whole new medium. The new comics were essentially picture versions of the pulps, a form of escapist literature popular in the 1920s and 1930s. These portrayed invulnerable heroes at a time when most people were at the mercy of events beyond their control, and the comics developed the theme. Superman, appearing in the wake of the Great Depression in America, symbolized the triumph of the individual over the forces of evil.

The image of the embattled superhero emerged as the focal point of a new American mythology, and a pantheon of demi-gods was invented to meet the challenges of the modern era. This was the 'golden age' of comic books. Their influence spread steadily beyond the confines of age, class or national boundary and, like their original readers, they went through different stages of growth and inevitably matured.

The comic book resembles the film media in many ways. Both manufacture dreams and both came into their own in the 1930s and 1940s when

the fantasy worlds they had to offer seemed infinitely preferable to the grim realities of life. Jules Feiffer tells us that the dream of many young artists during that first golden age of comics was to make movies on paper. In fact, there are a number of parallel techniques in comics and film and each medium has influenced the other. Alain Resnais, the eminent French director, admits to being inspired by comic books for films as different as *La Guerre Est Finie* and *Marienbad*. On the other hand, Will Eisner has enriched the comic book with such motion picture devices as low-angle framing and depth-of-field lighting. A true comic book artist selects the most telling viewpoints for his story in the same manner as a good film director. In the comic book, the highlights of the action are frozen in separate panels allowing the viewer's imagination to fill in the movement. Casual readers may be unaware that each comic book artist has his own style and may be highly creative and individual in his choices. The artist does not need to incur the same expense as a film maker and in this respect is much freer to visualize his world. He can build fabulous sets to lend credibility and atmosphere to the main action. However, the choice of what to draw is crucial. He must select the essential elements of his story from the myriad details that make up a scene in real life, otherwise the small frame may easily become cluttered and obscure the composition and design. Distortions of perspective, ambiguities of scale, lack of a third dimension, all serve to express his personal vision. Like films, comic books are mass-produced and ephemeral. They are an industry with an assembly-line production that often imposes factory-like conditions upon their creators. Unlike other media, however, the comic artist's tools are simple: pencil and paper, pen and ink, a paintbrush. The artist may write the story himself, or someone may do it for him. In either case, he must break it down into a series of panels in which he sketches his characters and balloons. His freedom is limited only by the number of pages he has been allotted and his deadline. The pencilled pages are then inked in, either by the same hand or, as in the case of a monthly series, by several so-called specialist artists. In this event, one illustrator may ink the figures, another the backgrounds, and yet another the words, balloons and panel borders. If there are no alterations (in America, there is a self-imposed censorship authority, the Comics Code, which lays down strict guidelines on story content) the pages are photographed and reduced to finished size. Once the colour has been indicated, the whole package is sent to the printer.

The best comic book artists are those who have developed their own shorthand, a style that permits them to draw an interesting story as well as meet a deadline month after month. To avoid monotony, the artist must be inventive in the presentation of each image and in the use of dramatic sequence. He must both verbalize and visualize the story as he goes along. Sufficient interest must be injected into each of the panels to capture the reader's attention. As each panel contains words and pictures, the words must not kill the image and the latter must both forward the narrative and stand as a picture in its own right

within the context of the whole page. The drawing evolves from the artist's need to resolve a story in a particular manner, and in the end it is the power of the pictorial conception rather than the text that informs the narrative. Each artist must create and populate a world, and the more powerfully realized his world the closer he will come to being a true master of the comic art.

All the artists portrayed in this volume have contributed significantly to the development of the comic book. Each in his own way has enriched some aspect of the art and added to its value as a means of communication. Each has strongly influenced his contemporaries and made a lasting impact on the form. Together their portfolios represent a thumb-nail sketch of the comic book's evolution from its inception to the present day, starting in America with the early *Spirit* tales of Will Eisner and the varied career of *Mad* genius Harvey Kurtzman, and then crossing to Great Britain for a look at the best of *Eagle's* craftsmen, Frank Bellamy, and to France for the fantastic worlds of Jean Giraud (Moebius) and Philippe Druillet. Richard Corben, an American, quickly gained international recognition as a master of the science fiction genre. A gifted story teller as well as artist, Corben's finest work is regularly published in Holland, Italy and France as well as the United States. England's Barry Windsor-Smith was discovered in America. He achieved renown with his *Conan the Barbarian* series for Marvel Comics, then ventured into poster art with his own Gorblimey Press. Wally Wood holds a unique place in the history of the comic book. His electric skills cover a wide range of styles and provide a bridge between the older masters and the new American talent. The underground movement, born on the West Coast in the sixties, is represented here by Victor Moscoso and the infamous Robert Crumb.

As even the briefest history, the selection is incomplete and many important figures have had to be omitted. However, there is enough to show the broad outline, indicate the new directions, and reveal the wealth of talent and imagination hidden within this scarcely appreciated medium.

Will Eisner synthesized in pen and ink two modern art forms, the movie and the popular short story. He was perhaps the first artist to perceive the analogy between the film frame and the comic book panel, and applied the principle of cutting between camera angles to the rapidly shifting viewpoints of his own panels. Lighting effects such as throwing deep shadows, enshrouding a scene in mist, or revealing a face with a lighted match all reflect a cinematic influence. He also studied such masters of the short story as Ambrose Bierce, de Maupassant and O'Henry, and understood the value of a well-structured plot. His own work exemplifies the transition from newspaper strips to the more complete narrative of the comic book.

Eisner was born in New York in 1917 and began his career as a professional cartoonist when the comic book industry was still in its infancy. In 1937, when he was only twenty, he founded his own studio with Jerry Iger and

together they produced over twenty original strips a week for such early comics as *Wow!* and *Famous Funnies*. From the beginning his work was admired for its fine draughtsmanship. *Hawk of the Sea* (later known simply as *The Hawk*), *Dollman*, *Sheena*, *Blackhawk* and *Uncle Sam* are all noteworthy examples of their period. With *The Spirit*, however, Eisner created a landmark in the evolution of the comic book. Making its debut in June 1940 as part of a weekly comic book insert in the Sunday newspapers, it became his best loved and most enduring creation. Nearly 650 episodes appeared over a period of twelve years. Each *Spirit* episode was a self-contained narrative of seven pages and resembled a short story, but the unfolding of the tales revealed a more elaborate design. The strip had an underlying unity that was all the more remarkable for the great diversity of themes. It wove a great human tapestry of colourful characters ranging from the exotic villainess to the petty crook, the aristocrat to the homeless child. Like the best fiction, it worked on more than one level. *The Spirit* could be enjoyed as pure melodrama, but it could also be seen as a burlesque of what it purported to tell. The stories embraced every literary genre and included spy thrillers, westerns, science fiction, allegories and fantasies, and even satires on romance comics complete with fake advertisements. Above all *The Spirit* is remembered for its splendid imagery. The locales were many and varied, covering everything from city slums to storm-swept isles in the Pacific. The central character, Denny Colt, was created according to the accepted formula of the masked crusader, but as a modern hero he had much more in common with Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade or Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe than with either Superman or Batman. Since Eisner preferred to probe the ironies of justice rather than depict caricatures of righteousness, *The Spirit* never attained the popularity of Superman. On the other hand, Eisner portrayed his main character with such wit and sophistication that Colt seems today the very archetype of the modern hero, and his adventures retain a certain freshness and originality even after thirty years. Eisner introduced him to his public as '...a young criminologist presumed dead by the public but who continues to assist society behind the mask of the Spirit'. He was a strapping physical specimen, at once clever and chivalrous, and his reputation alone was enough to make any criminal tremble. Always on the verge of unmasking by his adversaries, the Spirit was supported in his efforts by the only two people who knew his secret: Police Commissioner Dolan (a father figure whom Eisner came to resemble as he grew older) and his daughter Ellen. Ellen was the Spirit's original sweetheart, but her role was often eclipsed by the villainous *femmes fatales*. Ebony, a young negro boy, completed the regular crew as the Spirit's constant sidekick and comic relief. In the story reproduced on pages 13-19, Ebony is replaced by Sammy, a dead-end kid whom the Spirit befriends. Although Eisner employed a typical cast of characters from melodrama, he relied upon mood, pace and characterization, the essential ingredients of a good short story, to lift his tales above the mundane.

The central figures were often only the backdrop for Eisner's marvellous villains. However mean and contemptible, the criminals were always amusingly human and as likely to be ensnared by their own foibles as by any of the Spirit's gallant efforts. Eisner excelled in the characterization of his female villains. They were doe-eyed and full-lipped with big busts and wasp waists, and they tended to be exaggerated versions of Jane Russell, Joan Crawford and other Hollywood stars of the 1940s. He called them Silk Satin, P'Gell, Sand Saref and Plaster of Paris. Their names were often puns on their characters: 'I'm Plaster of Paris, the toast of Montmartre. I'll stick to my man till death do us part!' The scheming, enigmatic P'Gell was perhaps the most able of them all and, with Sand Saref, the only serious rival for Ellen, the original sweetheart. The ladies Eisner pitted against the Spirit never yielded more than a little. They were ambitious, clever, tragic and yet remorseless.

Eisner drew his characters for the most part in a realistic manner, which is to say that faces and figures were rendered representationally within the limits of a 1940s commercial illustration style. To enhance their dramatic appeal, however, certain personalities were caricatured and their faces stylized in the manner of the funny-animal cartoons. Even the Spirit's good looks had a rubbery flexibility which corresponded to the predicament in which he found himself.

Since Eisner was the writer as well as the illustrator he had considerable control over the pace of his narrative. He was aware of the importance of timing and, like a good orchestra conductor, would raise or lower the volume of certain passages for emphasis and contrast. Wordless panels, like that of the drowned man washed to shore on page 12, were used to counterpoint wordy sequences. The speed at which one read a given scene was determined by the number of still drawings. In this way, the artist could increase the tension of the story whenever he needed to do so. The simplest passages could be turned to good effect: a man sneaking upstairs, several people hiding in a dark room unaware of each other. Occasionally the text would so echo the rhythm of the panels that Eisner would indulge in rhyme. He displayed great confidence in the flexibility of his medium and never tired of experimenting with new possibilities.

With *The Spirit*, Eisner proved that comics were capable of good drama and could tell stories that had humour, irony and pathos. He gave a degree of depth to his characters and situations that added a new dimension to the medium and helped move it away from purely escapist fantasy towards a greater psychological realism.

Another important figure in this trend was **Harvey Kurtzman**. As artist, writer and editor of some of the best humour magazines in America since the Second World War, Kurtzman has been a major innovator in the field and has influenced at least two generations of comic book artists. Reality has always been the touchstone of his art and he constantly draws inspiration (CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

WILL EISNER

American cartoonist and illustrator. Born: New York City, 1917. Principal works: 1937-40 comic strips *Muss 'em up Donavon*, *The Three Brothers*, *K-51* and *Hawk of the Seas*; 1940-2 and 1946-52 *The Spirit*



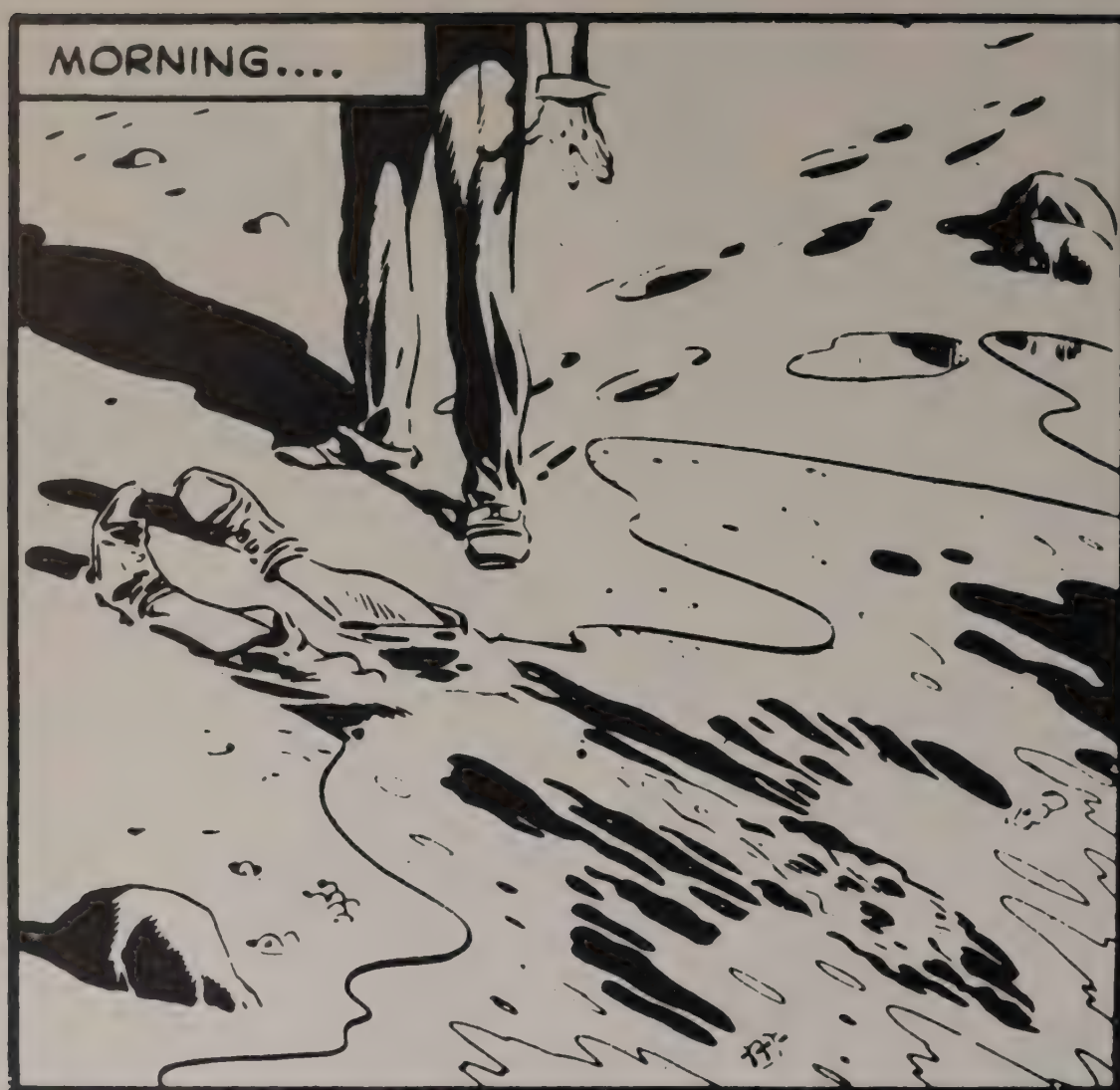
THE SPIRIT WAS EISNER'S MASTERPIECE. CREATED IN JUNE 1940, IT RAN FOR 650 EPISODES AS PART OF A COMIC BOOK INSERT FOR SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS.

ABOVE: THE PASSIONATE, SENSUAL PEGGELL. THE STRIP WAS FAMOUS FOR ITS EXCITING FEMALE VILLAINS WHO WERE OFTEN EXAGGERATED VERSIONS OF FILM STARS SUCH AS JOAN CRAWFORD OR JANE RUSSELL. FROM: THE SPIRIT (1946)

OPPOSITE: THE SPIRIT ON A STORMY DESERT ISLAND WITH SILK SATIN, ANOTHER WONDERFULLY WICKED HEROINE. EISNER'S STORIES ARE REMEMBERED FOR THEIR SPLENDID IMAGERY AND EXOTIC LOCALES. FROM: THE SPIRIT (1949)







ABOVE: THE TIDE WASHING OVER A DEAD BODY. EISNER COULD ACHIEVE MASTERFUL EFFECTS WITH A FEW SIMPLE BRUSHSTROKES. FROM: *THE SPIRIT* (18 JUNE 1950)

OPPOSITE: THE OPENING PANEL OF A COMPLETE SEVEN-PAGE STORY. EISNER ALWAYS INTEGRATED THE TITLE INTO HIS PICTURE IN SOME WAY, WHETHER ON HOARDINGS, SCRAPS OF WIND-BLOWN PAPER, OR (AS SHOWN HERE) ON

CRUMBLING BRICK WALLS. DESPITE ITS EPIC LENGTH AND THE GREAT VARIETY OF STORIES, *THE SPIRIT* HAS AN UNDERLYING THEMATIC UNITY. IN THIS TALE SAN SAREF RECOGNIZES THE MASKED HERO AS HER CHILDHOOD BEAU, DENNY COLT. NOTE HOW EISNER CREATES ATMOSPHERE WITH CINEMATIC LIGHTING EFFECTS, AND THE NICE BALANCE OF ROMANCE AND HUMOUR. FROM: *THE SPIRIT* (15 JAN 1950)

Bring in Sand Saref...



POLICE EMERGENCY
WARD 4

QUIET
PLEASE
OPERATING



YOU MAY COME IN
NOW, COMMISSIONER.
HE'LL LIVE, BUT HE'S
VERY LOW...



"COUGH" COULDN'T
SEE MUCH, SIR...HAPPENED
SO QUICKLY...THEY WERE
DIGGIN' UP A BIG LEADEN
BOX...IT WAS IN THE
WATER...LADY AND TWO
MEN...MAN WITH GLASSES
SHOT ME...

GET ALL
THAT,
STENOGR?

YES
SIR.



GET ME A CITY HARBOR
MAP, DOLAN!

HELLO..HARBOR PATROL...
THIS IS THE SPIRIT...
...CHECK THE RECORDS AND
TELL ME OF ANY ACCIDENT OR
SINKING OFF 34TH STREET
ON SOUTH RIVER.

MUMBLE
MUMBLE
...WAY PEOPLE
ORDER ME
AROUND Y'D
NEVER KNOW
I WAS
BOSS...

HERE!



YES..YES... **WHAT?**
WHEN... YEAH...
NO THANKS...I'LL LET YOU
KNOW IF I NEED ANY MORE.

F'GOSH SAKES,
SPIRIT...SPILL IT!
..WHAT'S IT
ALL ABOUT?



A LIBERTY SHIP
WAS SUNK THERE SIX
YEARS AGO... ITS ONLY
CARGO WAS A
CAPTURED NAZI
GERM-WARFARE TANK
CONTAINING DEADLY
VIRUS... AND **THAT**
WAS WHAT THEY WERE
DIGGING OUT OF THE
RIVER BED!

MERCIFUL
MOTHER
MACHREE!
AND SOMEWHERE
IN THE CITY
SOMEONE'S
RUNNIN' AROUND
LOOSE WITH IT
..GULP!



AND INDEED...
IN A SUITE OF
THE PARK-RITZ
HOTEL...



DEAD...IN
EXACTLY 10
SECONDS...
A HUMAN MIGHT
BE ABLE TO
HOLD OUT FOR
20... NO MORE





VERY EFFICIENT..I'LL BUY!
OF COURSE, I REPRESENT A
VERY POOR LITTLE COUNTRY
SO I CANNOT PAY MUCH.
...A HUNDRED THOU...?

TUT-TUT..
YOU BROUGHT
A
MILLION
DOLLARS IN
CASH...AND
THAT'S EXACTLY
HOW MUCH I
WANT!



AH... MY DEAR SAND..
YOU ARE AS SHREWD
AS YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL.
TOGETHER, YOU AND I
... WE COULD BE
RULERS OF MY
COUNTRY...

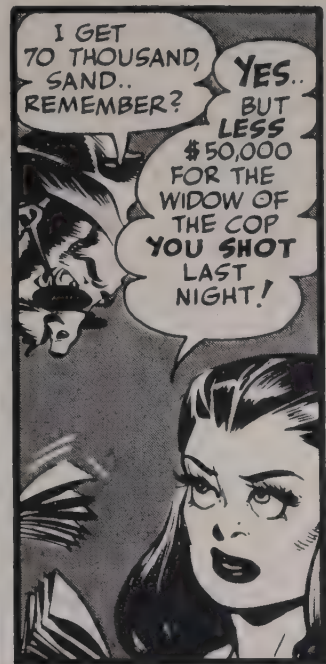


GET OUT,
YOU OAF!



HA HA...
Y'SURE
SAID
NO!

10..MMM...
20 THOUSAND
FOR YOU.



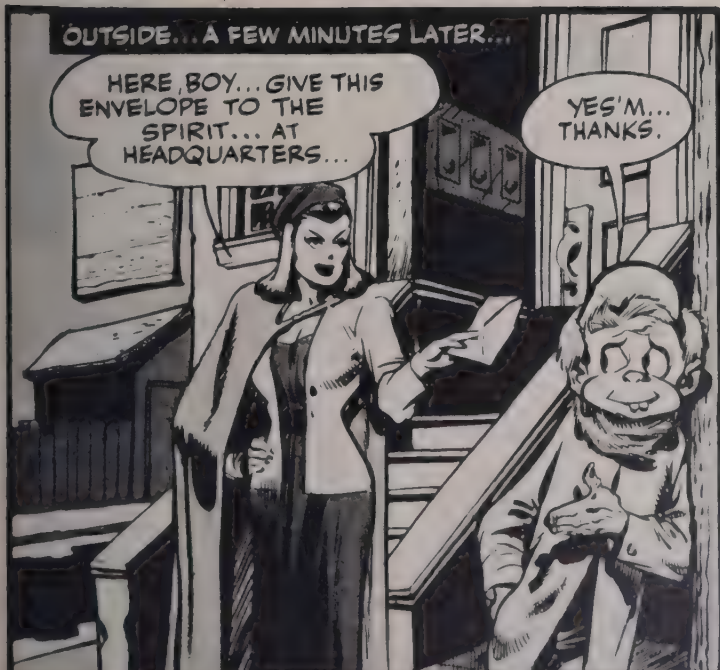
I GET
70 THOUSAND,
SAND..
REMEMBER?

YES..
BUT
LESS
\$50,000
FOR THE
WIDOW OF
THE COP
YOU SHOT
LAST NIGHT!



WHY YOU...

MY DEAR DR.VITRIOL...
I WILL BLOW OUT YOUR
MURDERING BRAINS IF YOU
STEP ANY CLOSER...
IT HAS BEEN NAUSEATING
TO DO BUSINESS WITH
YOU... **GOOD DAY!**



OUTSIDE... A FEW MINUTES LATER...

HERE, BOY... GIVE THIS
ENVELOPE TO THE
SPIRIT... AT
HEADQUARTERS...

YES'M...
THANKS.



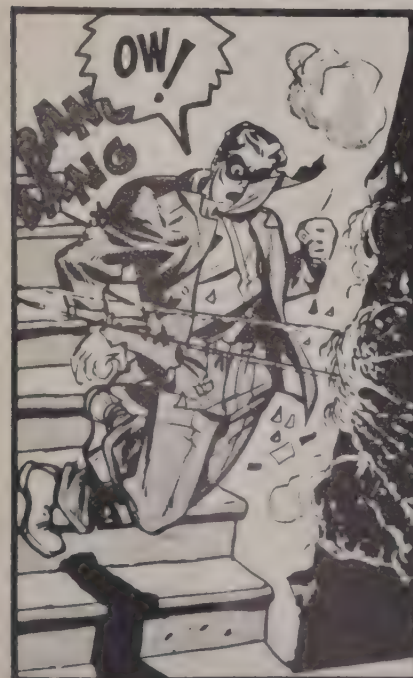
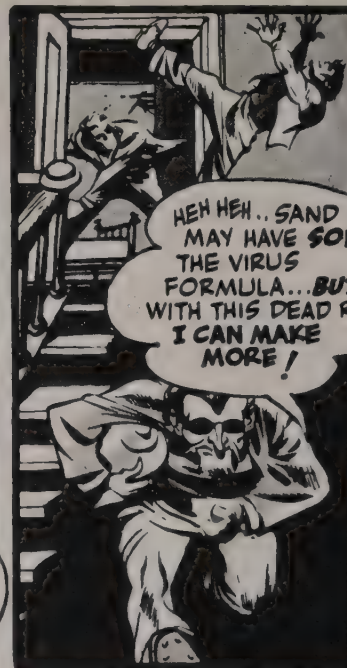
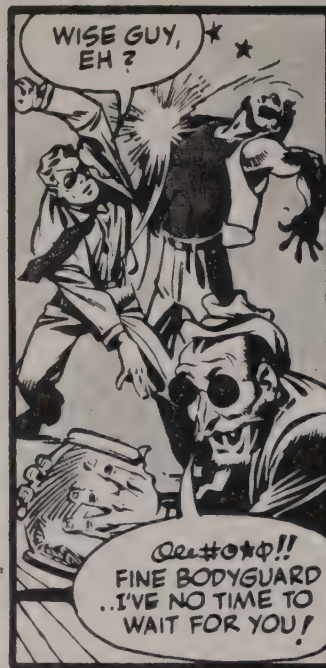
POLICE HEADQUARTERS

50 G'S... **WHEW!**
NOTE SAYS "...FOR
THE WIDOW OF PATROLMAN
SHOT EARLY TODAY..."
HEY **SPRIT!**...

C'MON, SAM..
THIS IS THE
BREAK WE
NEED!

..WHAT
HOTEL DID SHE
COME OUT OF?

COMMISSIONER
DOLAN



THE WATERFRONT... PIER 34TH STREET, TO BE EXACT... IN A SHROUD OF SWIRLING EVENING FOG... TWO MEN AND A WOMAN CAUTIOUSLY MOVE A SEAPLANE FROM ITS CLEVER CONCEALMENT...

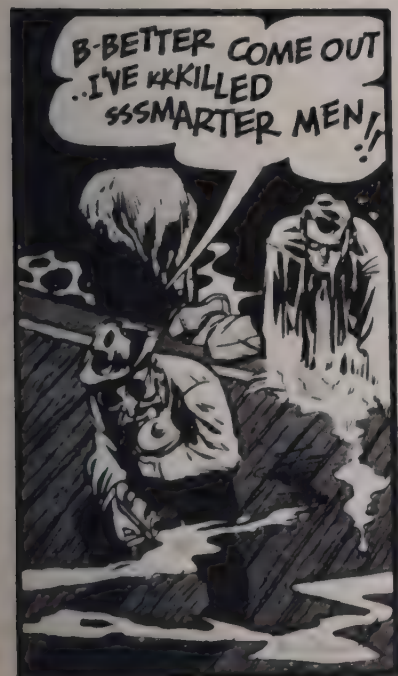
SHE'S READY, SIR... WE'D BETTER TAKE OFF BEFORE THE HARBOR PATROL STARTS ITS ROUNDS.

FINE, PILOT!

WELL, SAND?... SORRY I MADE THAT PASS AT YOU... BUT WHAT I OFFERED STILL GOES... **WEALTH... POSITION... POWER...**

....EH?

NO SALE... THIS IS MY BIG CHANCE... THE CHANCE I'VE WAITED FOR ALL THESE YEARS... I'M BACK HOME AND I'D LIKE TO STAY!... SIGH... MAYBE I'LL SETTLE DOWN IN A SMALL TOWN... EVEN MARRY SOME GUY WHO'LL OVERLOOK MY PAST...

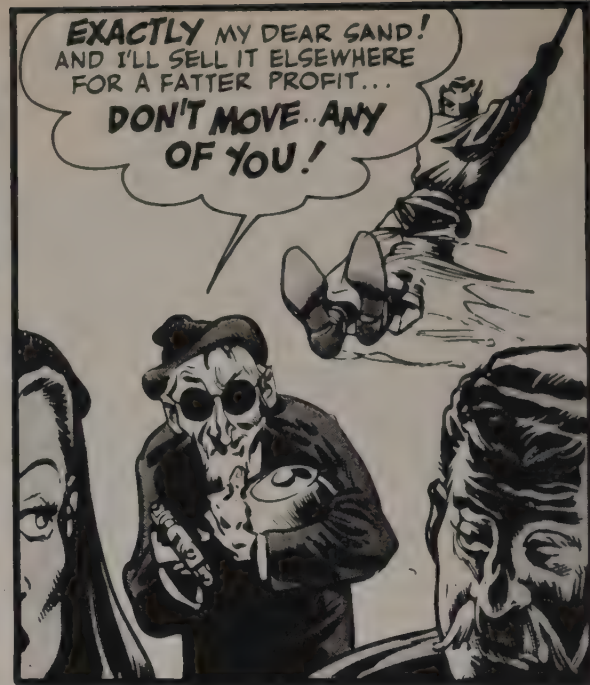




LOOK HERE
VITRIOL... YOU
WERE PAID WELL.
NOW MAKE YOUR
OWN GETAWAY!

PUFF PUFF I AM!
PUFF
ABOARD YOUR
PLANE. DO YOU THINK
I'D SETTLE FOR A
MEASLY \$20,000?

YOU'VE GOT THE
EXPERIMENTAL
GUINEA PIG...
YOU DOUBLE-
CROSSED ME!



EXACTLY MY DEAR SAND!
AND I'LL SELL IT ELSEWHERE
FOR A FATTER PROFIT...
**DON'T MOVE..ANY
OF YOU!**



THE SPIRIT!
HA...VERY CONVENIENT
...GET IN THE
PLANE, PILOT. I'LL
JOIN YOU AS SOON
AS I FINISH THEM
BOTH.



YEEOW THAT'S
NOT
NICE...

TSK TSK...
GETTING SO A
MAN CAN'T TURN
HIS BACK ON
ANYONE!



SO...AT LAST
I MEET THE
NOTORIOUS
SAND SAREF!

DON'T BE COY WITH ME,
SPIRIT. ALL THESE YEARS
AND A MASK DON'T FOOL
ME... **DENNY
COLT!**



YOU'VE GOT A LONG
MEMORY, SAND...

OH SHUT UP
WITH THE SHARP
TALK AND HOLD
ME..TIGHT..
DENNY..
TIGHT.



LIFE'S KICKED YOU ABOUT, DENNY.... A SCAR HERE AND THERE..THE MASK...

FIGHTING CRIME ALL THESE YEARS AS "THE SPIRIT".. I... AH, BUT YOU? YOU'VE BECOME A VERY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN...



I HATE TO INTRUDE ON SUCH A SOUL-SEARING SCENE... BUT THERE'S AN ARMY OF COPS COMING..

OH.. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

SAND. STAY HERE, WE'LL..



NO... NO DICE, DENNY... A LITTLE WHILE AGO I'D HAVE JUMPED AT THE OFFER, BUT I SEE NOW IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. YOU'RE A COP, AND YOU'D HAVE TO TURN ME IN... I'M TOO DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THIS.. ALL I ASK IS A FIVE MINUTE HANDICAP.

SURE... BUT SAND.



BUT MMFFFF

WE'LL MEET AGAIN... AND MAYBE NEXT TIME..

C'MON SAND, C'MON!



HEY... HALT!

LOOK... THERE'S THE SPIRIT!



CAREFUL WITH THAT BOX.. IT'S FULLA GERMS!

GREAT WORK, SPIRIT... WE GOT YOUR MESSAGE AT HEADQUARTERS.. SAMMY TIPPED US OFF!

WHO'S THAT IN THE PLANE?

FORGET IT, DOLAN.. FORGET IT.

from real events. Originator of the phenomenally successful *Mad* comics in 1952 (later to become *Mad Magazine*), he quickly revealed a talent for satire and has since parodied every facet of American life, including the comics themselves. He has been particularly successful at exposing the abject materialism of the average consumer, and at fostering a critical attitude towards the frivolities of mass media. Above all, he has brought a thoughtfulness and seriousness of purpose to his work that has gone a long way towards redeeming the popular image of the comic book.

Kurtzman's cartoons are deceptively simple. They are drawn in a bold, expressionistic style whose main purpose is to convey ideas forcefully and economically. His early experience in the medium involved strips such as *Pot Shot Pete* and *Hey Look*, single page gags which trained him to work within a strict format. On this scale he wrote and drew all his own stories. In 1950 he started his association with William Gaines at Entertaining Comics. His five years at EC were an exceptionally creative period for him. He started two war comics, *Frontline Combat* and *Two Fisted Tales*, which have become classics of their genre. Until then comics had depicted happy fantasies of American superheroes beating up hordes of brick-toothed yellow men. They never reflected the horror and evil of war. Kurtzman felt a responsibility towards his young readers not to make war into something glamorous, and he took great pains to ensure that the details were truthfully conveyed. His stories entailed an enormous amount of research. Besides rendering the uniforms, weapons and locales with meticulous accuracy, he also restructured actual events and examined the responses of true people to them. Languages and dialects were phonetically reproduced. Frenchmen and Koreans spoke their own language, and pidgin English was never substituted for a foreign tongue. Kurtzman's obsession with reality may have appeared excessive at the time, but it seems more than justified in retrospect. Not only were his comics enormously successful, they also produced a significant change in attitude among rival comic book companies who, in turn, began to cast their war adventures in a more realistic light.

Kurtzman's personal commitment to a growing number of projects at EC led him to assume increasingly the role of writer/editor, and he shifted gradually from producing his own finished artwork to providing stimulus and ideas for other artists. He would plot the story, draw complete layouts and then indicate in pencil on a tissue overlay what he wanted in each panel. This form of editorship found an ideal partner in Bill Elder who, in completing the artwork, did much to develop the wacky humour of *Mad* and whose name has been closely linked with Kurtzman ever since. Several other artists worked under Kurtzman, including Jack Davis and Wally Wood, and many of them stayed with him when EC went out of business, just after the introduction of the Comics Code in the mid-fifties. The code was designed to forestall persistent accusations that comics were a corrupting influence on the

young. However, its stringent supervision of content inevitably dampened the creative spirit of the more adult-orientated comic books and there were few new developments in the medium for several years.

Kurtzman went on to refine his satire in artistically impressive but short-lived magazines such as *Trump*, *Humbug* and *Help!* The last was produced in partnership with publisher Jim Warren and relied heavily on *fumetti*, photographic picture strips often made up of movie stills. The magazine continued uncertainly for a few years and was notable for the quality of talent Kurtzman attracted to work on it. A number of fine comedians such as Jerry Lewis, Milton Berle and Sid Caesar cooperated on the *fumetti*, along with Dick Van Dyke and Woody Allen who wrote stories. Terry Gilliam, later to contribute outstanding animated material for the Monty Python television show, worked as an editorial assistant. Gilbert Shelton, Jay Lynch, Skip Williamson, Dennis Kitchen – virtually the entire comics underground of the sixties – got their first exposure in the pages of *Help!* Robert Crumb also got his start there, contributing one of the original *Fritz the Cat* strips. At the same time Kurtzman and Elder were doing a comic strip called *Goodman Beaver*, about an eternal innocent along the lines of *Candide* who continually finds himself in the crossfire of the world's problems. Just before *Help!* folded, they had the idea of turning *Goodman Beaver* into a girl, and this led to his beautifully delineated full-colour descendant *Little Annie Fanny*. The latter appeared in *Playboy* for the first time in the October 1962 issue. The most lavish and expensive comic strip in America, it has also produced some of the most memorably scathing satires of the last decade.

The comic book, with glossy cover and full-colour pulp pages, is a uniquely American phenomenon. The British version is a weekly magazine which includes a number of continuing comic strips and occasionally printed stories. In England, the adventure pulps never became picture stories and the present format was derived instead from the Victorian comic papers of the nineteenth century which contained a mixture of comical drawings, short stories and illustrated jokes. When comic books are produced in Europe today they are normally either collections of comic strip episodes that have already appeared in periodicals or reprints of American comic books.

American comics began appearing in the late 1930s and Europe received its share of them. They transformed the reading habits of the younger generation and created a new market. With the arrival of the Second World War, however, paper shortages and trade embargoes made American comics scarce, and European publishers, eager to satisfy the growing demand, imported the original printing plates and reproduced the material on their own machines. Because the European presses did not have the mechanical colour tinting facility which was a special feature of American comic book production, the reprinted comics appeared in black and white. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 32)

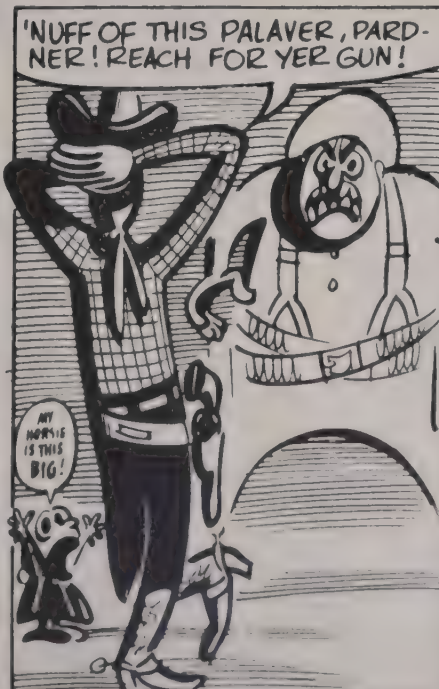
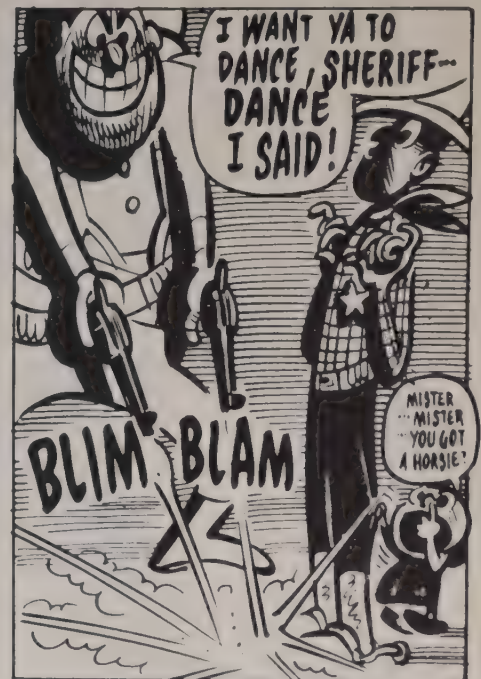
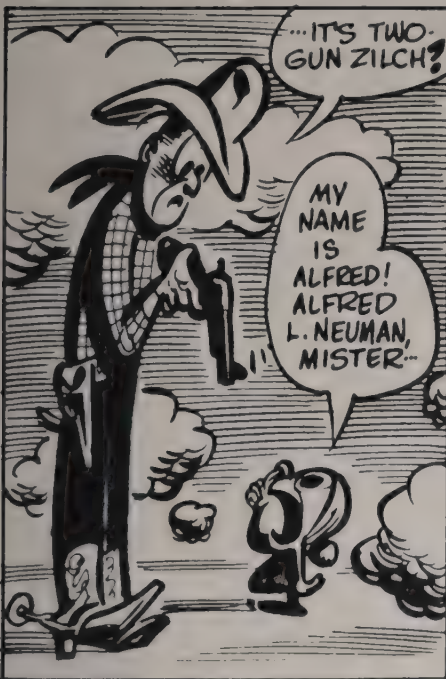
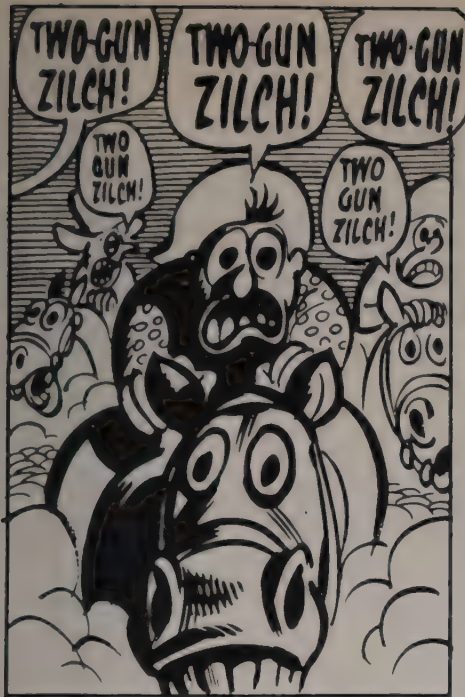
HARVEY KURTZMAN

American comic book and comic strip artist, writer and editor. Born: New York City, 1924. Principal works: 1945-50 comic book features *Black Venus*, *Black Bull*, comic strips *Silver Linings*, *Hey Look!*; 1950-6 editor of *Two Fisted Tales*, *Frontline Combat*, *Mad* (for *Entertaining Comics*); 1957- freelance writer and editor of *Trump*, *Humbug*, *Help!*, *Little Annie Fanny* for *Playboy*



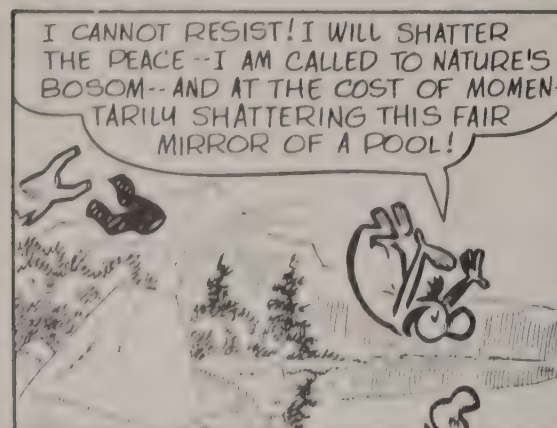
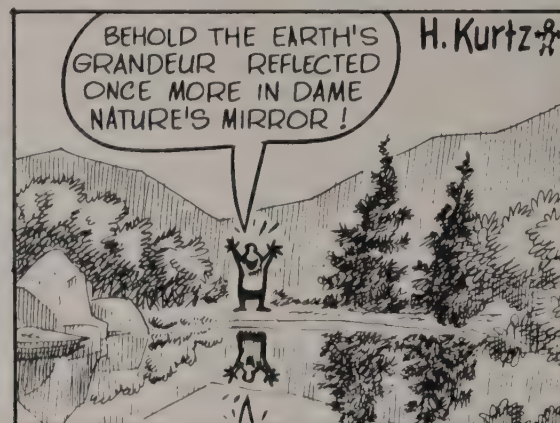
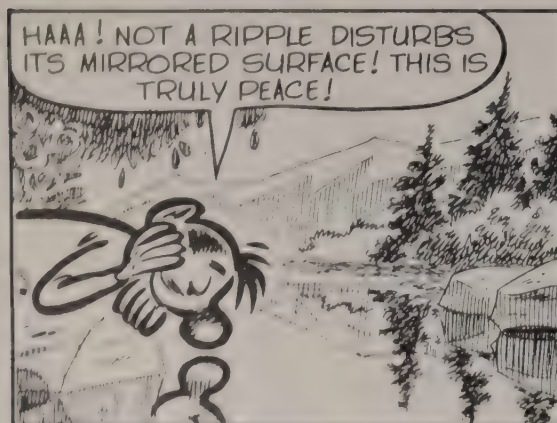
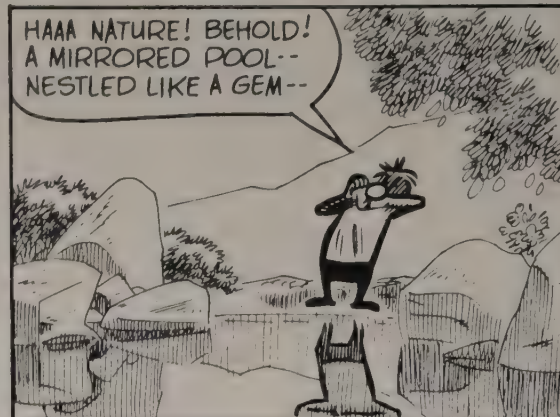
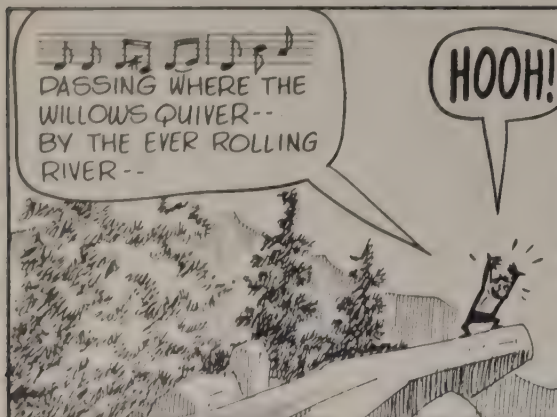
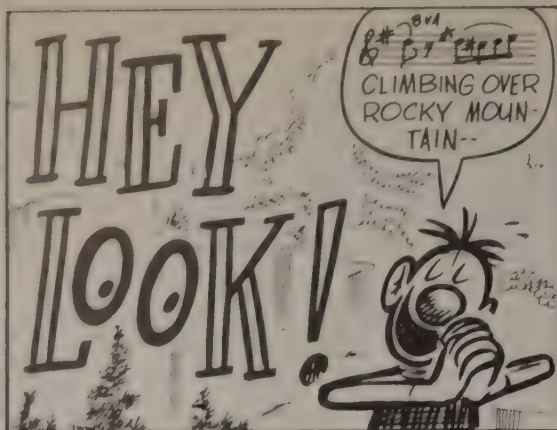
ABOVE: A PANEL FROM *POT SHOT PETE*, SHERIFF OF YUCCA PUCCA GULCH. AN EXAMPLE OF KURTZMAN'S EARLY HUMOUR. THIS STORY SATIRIZES THE SINGING COWBOYS OF THE LATE 1940s SUCH AS GENE AUTRY AND ROY ROGERS. THEY WERE UPRIGHT GENTLEMEN WHO NEVER SWORE, ALWAYS GOT THE VILLAIN, AND LEFT THEIR FEMALE ADMIRERS TO PINE FOR THEM AS THEY RODE OFF INTO THE SUNSET. OPPOSITE: A PAGE FROM THE SAME STORY. NOTE THE NAME OF THE CHILD ACCOSTING POT SHOT PETE. WHEN THE *MAD* COMIC BOOK BECAME A MAGAZINE IN 1955, THE NEW LOOK DEMANDED A MASCOT. ALFRED E. NEUMAN WAS HIS NAME. FROM: *JOHN WAYNE ADVENTURE COMICS* 5 (1950)

OVERLEAF: A PANEL FROM ONE OF KURTZMAN'S ANTI-WAR STORIES, *AIRBURST*, SHOWING HIS BOLD, EXPRESSIONISTIC STYLE OF DRAWING. FROM: *FRONTLINE COMBAT* 4 (1952)









ABOVE: HEY LOOK! ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF KURTZMAN'S EARLY WORK. HE GAINED CONTROL OF HIS MEDIUM WITH ONE-PAGE GAGS SUCH AS THIS. THE LAST PANEL ALWAYS CONTAINED THE PUNCH LINE. FROM: JOKER 33 (1948)

OPPOSITE: A COLOUR ROUGH SHOWING KURTZMAN'S METHOD OF WORKING. AS EDITOR, HE NOT ONLY RESEARCHED AND WRITING EACH PAGE BUT ALSO SKETCHED THE STORY PANEL BY PANEL FOR OTHER ARTISTS TO COMPLETE. FOR THE EVENTUAL COVER OF TWO FUNNY TALES 25 (1952)



FELLAS!
I JUST GOT WORD
THEY'RE ARRANGING
AN ARMISTICE!

YEAH! YEAH!
TELL JONESY, HERE
ABOUT YOUR ARMISTICE!
HE'LL BE GLAD!



THE COVER FOR AN EARLY MAD COMIC SATIRIZING THE ORIGINAL KING KONG. THE TITLE HAS BEEN REMOVED TO EMPHASIZE KURTZMAN'S ILLUSTRATION. FROM: MAD 6 (1953)



THE COVER TO AN ANTHOLOGY OF KURTZMAN'S WORK INTRODUCED BY ROBERT CRUMB. KURTZMAN DEPICTS HIMSELF DRAWING LITTLE ANNIE FANNY, HIS PLAYBOY CREATION. NOTE THE SIGNATURE WHICH HE HAS USED SINCE HIS EARLY DAYS IN THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY. FROM: KURTZMAN'S KOMIX (1976)

BELOW: DETAIL FROM THE FULL-COLOUR CENTRE SPREAD OF *TRUMP* WITH SOME VERY FAMILIAR FACES. IT WAS PAINTED BY BILL ELDER AND JACK DAVIES UNDER KURTZMAN'S EDITORSHIP. THE CLUTTERED PANEL TECHNIQUE WAS FIRST DEVELOPED BY THE KURTZMAN - ELDER TEAM IN *MAD*. FROM: *TRUMP* 1 (1957)

OPPOSITE: GOODMAN BEAVER, THE ETERNAL INNOCENT AND PROTOTYPE FOR *PLAYBOY*'S ANNIE FANNY. NOTE THE NUMBER OF EXTRA JOKES WITHIN EACH PANEL. FROM: *GOODMAN MEETS S*PERM*N, HELP* 15 (1962)



The quality of reproduction was invariably poor and did nothing to enhance the reputation of the American product.

These early comics were concerned with violent struggles of good against evil. After the war, the villains and supermen were exchanged for crime lords and FBI agents. 'Crime does not pay' became the new message and the fight continued unabated. To the average Englishman, tired of war and far removed from the brutal world of Chicago gangsters, these stories were unconscionably violent and bloody. In 1950 Marcus Morris, in order to stem the tide of what he called 'these deplorable American comic books', produced *Eagle*, a tabloid-sized weekly containing several wholesome adventure strips.

Eagle was a handsomely produced magazine. It was also one of the first after the war to have comic strips in colour. Its photogravure method of printing gave the artist the freedom to water-colour his own drawing and a new measure of control over the end result. *Eagle* also provided England with two of its most outstanding comic book artists in Frank Hampson and Frank Bellamy.

Frank Bellamy was one of the first Englishmen in the comic book field to achieve international recognition. He was dedicated to the medium of the comic book and sought to make it worth while. His draughtsmanship, page layout and use of colour are the most striking features of his work. His high standards and attention to detail have made him an important influence in European comics today.

Bellamy began as an independent illustrator. His freelance work led him to *Eagle* in 1957 when he was assigned the difficult task of depicting Winston Churchill's life in pictures. The strip, entitled *The Happy Warrior*, was the first such venture to be attempted on a living personality, and it was serialized on the back page of the magazine. After a hesitant start on *The Happy Warrior*, when the strip tended to resemble a series of photographs with explanatory text, Bellamy began experimenting with page layout. He became concerned with the image of the page as a whole and treated the individual panels as units which could either enhance or detract from the larger picture. He would ink the lettering and panel frames last, once the visual narrative was complete, in order to see whether every panel needed a border or if 'open' drawings could be contrasted with the framed ones. He used circular panels and zig-zags as well as the conventional squares or rectangles, modifying the shapes according to the needs of the story. The effect was dynamic. In fact, Bellamy composed the figures on his page so skilfully that it tends to be detrimental to lift a panel out of context.

Bellamy filled the back page of *Eagle* with several more stories until, in 1960, he was asked to redesign *Dan Dare* for the front section of *Eagle*.

Unlike his American counterparts, Will Eisner and Harvey Kurtzman, Bellamy did not write the stories he drew. He did, however, submit ideas for stories and preliminary conceptions of how the episodes should evolve. He also

went to great lengths to design as real a world as possible for his creations. Like Kurtzman, he spent many long hours researching the stories and collecting accurate background information. Both *The Happy Warrior* and *Dan Dare* strips are good examples of his attention to detail, but the latter is perhaps even more remarkable for being set in the world of the future. Under Frank Hampson's direction, *Dan Dare* had been a studio production involving many people. Immense resources were brought to bear, including live-action films of the characters and models of spacecraft and uniforms, and at one stage there were even mock-ups of a space headquarters and an alien city. Bellamy's fantasy world was more approachable and his characters more authentic. He changed the uniforms, the space ships, even the space fleet emblems, sharpening the visual impact of the pages and giving the whole series a more personal feel.

Bellamy was a consummate draughtsman and his pictures had an almost photographic realism to them. From the dialogue script he was given, Bellamy would draft the text in pencil in roughly the sequence he considered it likely to fall. Then he would ink his figures directly on to the art board with the barest of pencil lines to guide him. This gave his drawings a spontaneous look. Sometimes he would ink the lines four or five times to achieve the right density of black. If there was a correction, he removed the ink with a razor, but never resorted to the process-white other artists use to erase mistakes. When he was satisfied, he coloured in the drawing with gouache or waterproof ink. His finished artwork looked as perfect as the printed page. Bellamy used colour to enhance the impact of the page as a whole. He would occasionally do a sequence in monochrome, using several tints of a single colour to lend mood and enliven the story.

In October 1962 he started work on his favourite and most acclaimed creation, *Heros the Spartan*. The double-page spread from this strip (see pages 38-9) took him a full week to complete and won him the Academy of Comic Book Arts award in America as the 'best foreign comic book artist'. In *Heros the Spartan* Bellamy was able to give free rein to his imagination. He invented giant warrior tribes, sea monsters and wolf-men, and introduced a host of exotic characters, from Roman soldiers to Druids, into a world that could never have existed until he had drawn it. Towards the end of his life Bellamy gave up comics and his work for *Eagle*, but continued to draw a black and white newspaper strip called *Garth* until his sudden death in 1976.

Bellamy's expertise as a colourist was well demonstrated in *Eagle*, and the colour reproductions were far ahead of their time. It is only recently that certain other comics have begun to aspire to a similar standard. Perhaps the best example is *Metal Hurlant*, a French magazine in the vanguard of what is heralded as 'the new comic'. In these books one sees again the quality of artwork which Bellamy first promoted and which would certainly have met with his approval. *Metal Hurlant* has published many of the major new talents in comic book art, amongst them America's Richard Corben.

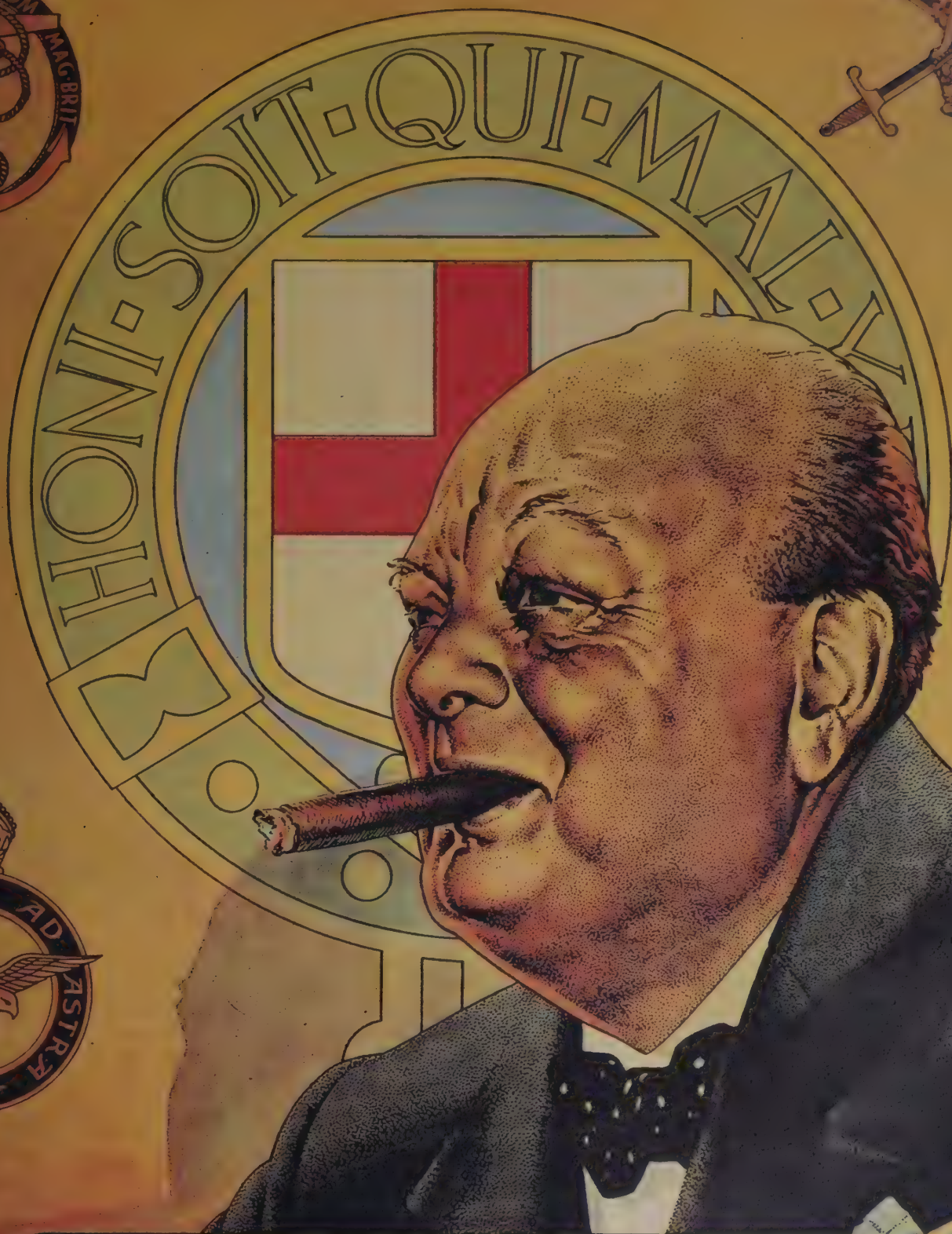
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 42)

FRANK BELLAMY

British illustrator and cartoonist. Born: Kettering, Northants., 1917. Died: London, 1976. Principal works: 1948-55 comic strips for *Mickey Mouse Weekly*, including *The Secret of the Sands*, *The Living Desert*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *King Arthur* and *Robin Hood*; 1956-67 features for *Eagle*, including *The Happy Warrior*, *The Shepherd King*, *Marco Polo*, *Dan Dare*, *Frazer of Africa*, *Montgomery of Alamein* and *Heros the Spartan*; 1971-6 newspaper strip *Garth*



TWO EXAMPLES FROM *THE HAPPY WARRIOR*, THE LIFE STORY OF WINSTON CHURCHILL, IN WHICH BELLAMY USES GRAPHIC SYMBOLISM TO GREAT EFFECT. ABOVE: A NEWSBOY ANNOUNCES THE ARMISTICE OF 1918. THE VISUAL IMPACT IS MUCH STRONGER THAN, FOR EXAMPLE, A NEWSPAPER HEADLINE WOULD BE. OPPOSITE: PORTRAIT OF CHURCHILL (ON THE LAST PAGE OF THE STORY) TYPIFYING HIS 'BRITISH' QUALITY. FROM: *EAGLE* (1958)



*Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last...
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is THE HAPPY WARRIOR.*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



ABOVE: THE ANGULAR VISORS WHICH BELLAMY DESIGNED FOR DAN DARE AND HIS CREW WERE TO APPEAR NEARLY A DECADE LATER IN THE PROMOTIONAL ADVERTISEMENTS FOR STANLEY KUBRICK'S FILM, *2001*. FROM: *EAGLE* (1960)

OPPOSITE: AN ACTION SEQUENCE FROM DAN DARE'S *TRIP TO TROUBLE* SHOWING BELLAMY'S ATTENTION TO DETAIL. IN HIS PORTRAYAL OF DARE, THE UNIFORMS, THE WEAPONRY AND THE TANK, BELLAMY GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF DRAWING FROM LIFE. FROM: *EAGLE* (1960)



DAN WATCHES TENSELY...

THEY MUST ALL BE ON THE WEAK SECTION NOW, CALO - ARE YOU SURE IT WILL COLLAPSE?

HAVE NO FEAR, COLONEL - LOOK!



SECONDS LATER...

NO SIGN OF LIFE! D'YOU THINK THEY'RE ALL KNOCKED OUT, OR JUST SHAMMING?

I'LL SOON FIND OUT, DAN...



HERE GOES!

CALO MAKES A WHITE FLAG OF TRUCE WITH HIS RIFLE AND A CLOTH...



SUDDENLY... THE DEAD COME TO LIFE!



HE'S HIT...



I'LL GET HIM!

FRANK BELLAMY



THANKS, DAN. THEY'RE NO RESPECTERS OF A TRUCE FLAG, AS YOU SEE!



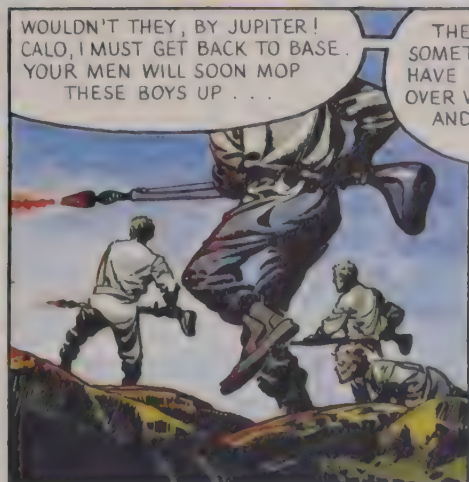
DON'T THIS COLUMN RADIO FOR HELP?

THEY'LL BE IN NO HURRY TO DO THAT, DAN - THE GRANDAX HAS A SHORT WAY WITH THOSE WHO FAIL.



THIS GRANDAX IS AN ABSOLUTE DICTATOR, THEN?

COMPLETELY SO - NOT A MAN ON THEIR SIDE WOULD DARE MOVE WITHOUT HIS COMMAND!



WOULDN'T THEY, BY JUPITER! CALO, I MUST GET BACK TO BASE. YOUR MEN WILL SOON MOP THESE BOYS UP...



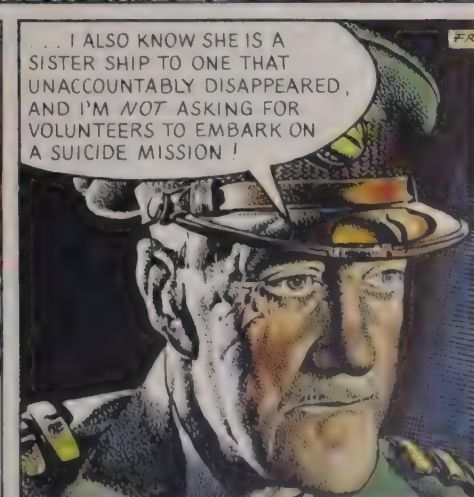
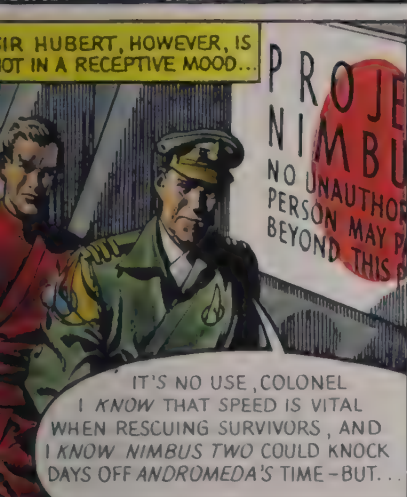
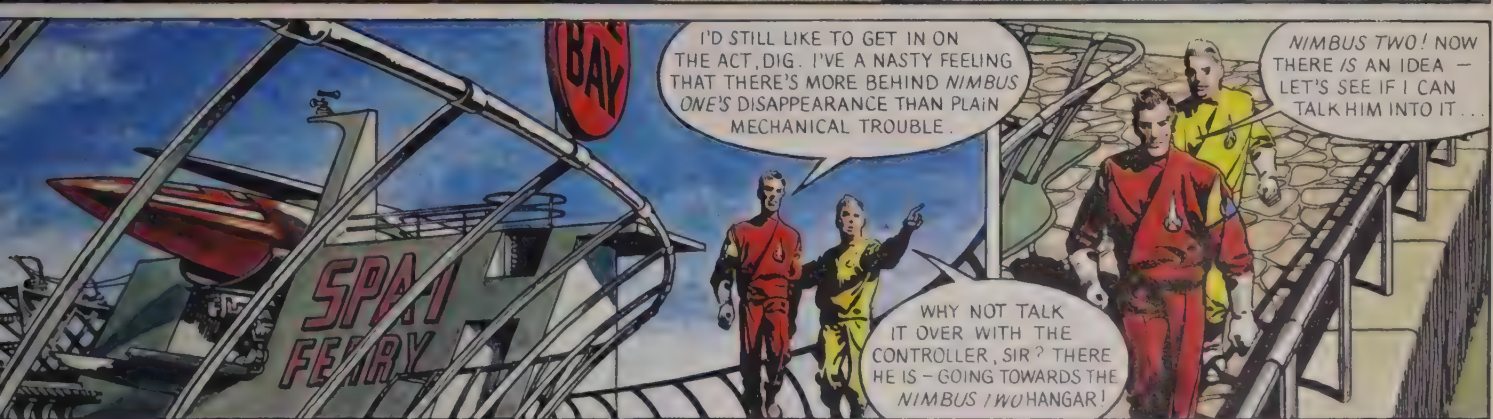
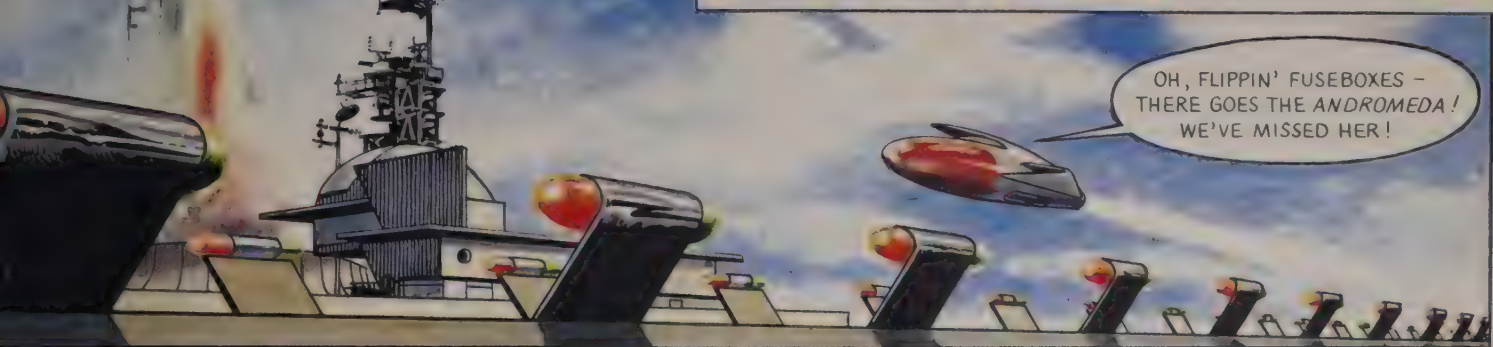
THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO TALK OVER WITH LEX AND DIGBY!

TO BE CONTINUED



ABOVE AND OPPOSITE. BELLAMY COMPLETELY REDESIGNED THE SPACEFLEET OF FRANK HAMPSON'S ORIGINAL *DAN DARE*, ACHIEVING A STYLISTIC UNITY THAT WAS LACKING IN THE EARLIER STORIES. FROM: *EAGLE* (1960)

PAGES 40-1: AN EPISODE FROM *HEROS THE SPARTAN*, SCRIPTED BY TOM TULLY. THE SERIES WAS BELLAMY'S FAVOURITE AS IT ALLOWED HIM TO GIVE FULL REIN TO HIS IMAGINATION. THIS SPREAD WAS EXHIBITED IN NEW YORK IN 1972 WHEN BELLAMY RECEIVED THE AWARD FOR BEST FOREIGN ARTIST FROM THE ACADEMY OF COMIC BOOK ART. NOTE THE WAY HE CONSTRUCTS THE PAGES BOTH IN *HEROS THE SPARTAN* AND *DAN DARE* AROUND A FOCAL POINT OF INTEREST. FROM: *EAGLE* (1963)



HEROS

The new Caesar, a ruthless and tyrannical man who sought Heros's death, had given the young Spartan command of the Fifth Legion, the worst unit in the armies of Rome. Accompanied by Caesar's courier, Crassus, the Legion marched north to Gaul, with orders to stamp out an evil Druid cult. Soon, Heros and his men were attacked!

the SPARTAN

Fear and panic broke out among Heros's legionnaires...

NO, YOU FOOLS! HOLD YOUR RANK! FORM BATTLE ECHELON!

WE ARE AMBUSHED! RUN—MAKE FOR THE ROCKS!

But many of the descending barbs found a target. The treacherous Crassus cowered amid a chaos of slaughter...

THEY SCREAM LIKE MEN WITHOUT HOPE! THE LEGION IS DOOMED! I MUST FLEE THIS PLACE OF SLAUGHTER!

Unnoticed in the confusion, he slid up behind Heros, and...

Suddenly, a thousand bow-strings twanged...

CLOSE UP! USE YOUR SHIELDS TO FORM A PROTECTIVE ROOF!

THERE IS NO ESCAPE!

Through the pain of Crassus's sword-thrust, Heros saw the flaxen-haired giants attacking...

IT IS THE END FOR THESE WRETCHES I COMMAND! WITHOUT THIS WOUND, I MIGHT HAVE LED THEM TO SAFETY! BUT!—I...

As Heros's senses faded, the Barbarians massacred his legionnaires...

BUT FIRST— I STRIKE A BLOW FOR CAESAR!

BY MITHRAS! THE GAULS ATTACK IN UTTER SILENCE!

SIL THE

Barbarian hands tilted the standard of the legion...

WE WILL CARRY IT THROUGHOUT THE LAND AS A TOKEN OF OUR VICTORY! IT WILL INSPIRE THE TRIBES OF GAUL TO UNITE, AND MARCH IN A CRUSHING TIDE ON THE EMPIRE OF ROME!

The eyes of Heros the Spartan slowly opened...

UUUUHHH! THE—THE BARBARIANS HAVE—GONE! BUT WHAT OF MY MEN—THE LEGION...?

A LEFT OTHER DEAD! FIFTH IS DE

MARK BELLAMY

But Heros's cowardly army scattered like sheep. And, up above . . .

Next moment, the rocks above Heros swarmed with the advancing foe . . .

NOW, MEN OF THE BRIGANTES! IT IS TIME TO STRIKE!

MORE OF THE BARBARIANS—AND ON OUR FLANKS, TOO! WE ARE TRAPPED!

LET HIM GO! LET HIM RETURN TO ROME AND TELL HIS EMPEROR OF THE FATE WHICH AWAITS ALL THOSE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO TEST THE MIGHT OF THE BRIGANTES!

As Heros fell, his horse was seized by Crassus, and urged from the battlefield . . .

AS CAESAR ORDERED, I HAVE ENSURED THAT HEROS WILL NEVER RETURN FROM THIS MISSION! BUT MY OWN LIFE IS STILL IN DANGER!

A cry from their leader stayed the Barbarians' bows . . .

BUT THE OTHERS MUST DIE! SLAY THEM! LET NO ROMAN ESCAPE!

In vain, a handful of battle-hardened veterans tried to rally their comrades . . .

FORM A RING AROUND THE EAGLE! FIGHT, YOU SPINELESS CUR—AAAGH!

THE STANDARD-BEARER FALLS! IT IS THE END!

The grim carnage continued. And, as the last Roman fell . . .

ENOUGH! IF ANY ROMAN STILL BREATHES, LEAVE HIM TO THE BUZZARDS! BUT BRING THE RED CRESTS' EAGLE—GOD!

Racked with shame and remorse, Heros stumbled from the silent battlefield . . .

I LED MY COMMAND—INTO DISHONOUR AND DISGRACE! I AM NOT—WORTHY—TO LIVE...

As Heros once more collapsed beneath the blazing sun, harsh, hate-filled eyes glared angrily down at him . . .

Richard Corben emerged from the obscurity and relative isolation of mid-western America in the late sixties and quickly established himself as one of the most original artists in the comic book medium. An amateur in the true sense of the word, he began drawing comics as a hobby when he was still working as a commercial film animator at the Calvin Studios in Kansas City, Missouri. His first published work appeared in a fan magazine called *Voice of Comictim* in 1968. At the same time he was saving money to publish his own underground comic book entitled *Fantagor*, which consisted of four science fiction tales that he had conceived and drawn himself. They contained elements of the early EC horror stories, but included explicit violence and sexuality, and already embodied the main themes of his future work. Corben felt certain he would take the publishing world by storm, but his first commercial venture proved a disaster. Distributing by mail order was time-consuming and yielded scant results. He seemed strangely aloof from the burgeoning underground comix movement on the West Coast and from the channels that had already been established to cope with the new product. Fortunately he was contacted by Gary Arlington, a San Francisco distributor who had been alerted to his early 'fanzine' work and who encouraged him to market his work more conventionally. It was not until *Fantagor* was reprinted in 1970 by the Last Gap publishing house as a regular underground comic that it received the success it deserved.

Corben went on to work in overground horror comics such as *Creepy* for James Warren, the New York publisher of Eisner's *The Spirit*, but he continues to do stories and covers for a variety of underground and fan magazines where he can give uninhibited expression to his more outlandish fantasies. In recent years the best stories – such as *Rowlf* and *Den* – have been reprinted in *Metal Hurlant* on high-quality paper, revealing for the first time the sumptuous colour of his narratives. Corben is one of the few American artists to have gained a large following in Europe. His reputation has grown steadily, and today it has reached the proportions of a cult.

Corben is concerned with narration through sequential imagery. Ideally the story should be totally visual. With his background in animation, Corben has successfully applied the film story-board technique to the comic book. His comics are like shorthand versions of animated films, with the panels corresponding to the 'key' drawings in animation from which others are made to provide the illusion of movement. The vigorous action of his characters dominates the panel and provides the impetus for the sequence. *Den*, one of Corben's major achievements to date, was an offshoot of a 16mm film called *Neverwhere* which combined live action and animation, and won Corben the Cine Golden Eagle Award in 1971. In both the film and the comic strip, the initial protagonist is a timid engineer whose job is to construct electronic circuits. One day a mysterious message instructs him to build a special circuit which, once turned on, becomes the gateway to another dimension. The hero finds himself transformed into a muscular giant of a man in a prehistoric universe of dragons,

animal-men and beautiful, savage women. Calling himself Den, he sets forth to discover this strange world and has several exotic and terrifying adventures.

Corben likes to explore the basic theme of good and evil by recreating traditional myths in other-worldly settings. Woman, always portrayed as a sublime sexual creature, is both the object of desire and the source of evil. Corben's women appear to be innocent, and may indeed be so, but it is what man does because of them that causes his downfall. In *Rowlf*, his splendid comic book novel about the loyalty of a dog to his mistress Maryara, man's bestiality is represented from the outset. Through a magic spell gone wrong, Rowlf becomes half dog, half man, and, as this hybrid creature, he must rescue his mistress from demons of canis(dog)land. The moral implications of his stories are tempered by a fatalistic outlook on the world. Mankind is lustful, greedy and violent, and inevitably doomed to extinction. This forbidding vision provides the source for some of the most poignant tales. In *Going Home* an old man travels back through space with two robot companions to see the earth before his death. Owing to the peculiar nature of space, so many years have passed before he reaches his destination that the whole human race has become extinct. The old man is the last survivor. At the sight of his planet he is overcome with emotion, succumbs to a heart attack, and dies.

Corben has developed a characteristic style that is unmistakable. He is a graphic artist rather than a cartoonist and is continually experimenting with new effects. His concern with obtaining a sculptural quality, a three-dimensional roundness to his objects, has led him to explore the potential of shading, hatchwork, linear and aerial perspective. Working in the basement studio of his home in Kansas City, he often makes clay models of his characters, shifting them about under lights to study the changing shadow forms. Perhaps the most striking feature of his work is the colour. His dazzling washes of ink and paint jump out from the page, giving a striking immediacy to his pictures.

Corben's love of the fantastic, as well as his experimental approach to the techniques of his drawing, is shared by another young artist, **Barry Windsor-Smith**.

In many ways Smith was a special figure in the comic book medium and, although now entirely divorced from it, he can fairly be considered a major and lasting influence. The only Englishman to reach the upper strata in the world of American comics, he entered the field at the age of nineteen by hopping a jet to New York with an artcase of samples and demanding to be taken on by Marvel Comics, then acknowledged (1968) as the most creative house in the business.

Smith owed his greatest debt at this time to the legendary Jack Kirby, and his early work for Marvel, though much cruder, has the same slightly preposterous force about it. The Kirby debt was soon paid off, however, and Smith fell under a far more profound influence – that of the nineteenth-century Slav decorative artist and designer Alphonse Mucha. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 54)

RICHARD CORBEN

American comic book and underground comix artist, and film animator. Born: Anderson, Missouri, 1940. Pseudonyms: Gore, Darve, Harvey Sea. Principal works: 1970-5 comic books *Fantagor*, *Rowlf*, *Fever Dreams*, *Den*; 1971 film *Neverwhere*; 1976 comic novel *Bloodstar*.



ABOVE: A PANEL FROM *DEN*, THE COMIC BOOK SEQUEL TO HIS ANIMATION FILM *NEVERWHERE* FOR WHICH CORBEN WON A CINE AWARD IN 1971. THE HERO IS A TIMID ELECTRONICS ENGINEER WHO DISCOVERS A GATEWAY TO ANOTHER DIMENSION AND IS TRANSFORMED INTO THE NAKED SUPER-MUSCLED DEN. FROM: *METAL HURLANT* 4 (1975) (REPRINT)

OPPOSITE: A PAGE FROM *GOING HOME*, A POIGNANT TALE OF THE LAST MAN IN THE WORLD WHO WISHES, AFTER HALF A MILLION YEARS OF WANDERING IN SPACE, TO SEE HIS HOME BEFORE HE DIES. FROM: *FUNNY WORLD* 14 (1972)

ANOTHER ATTACK!
OXYGEN AND STIMULATOR,
QUICKLY.



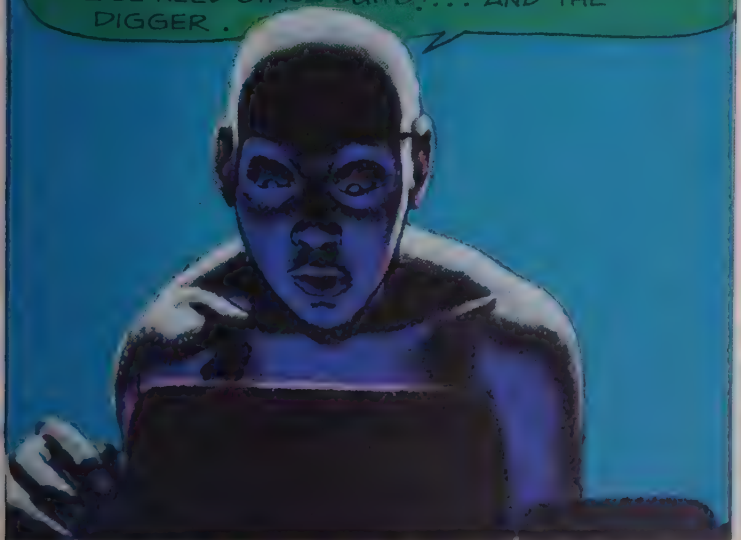
... NO USE... HE'S
DEAD, HERMAN!



WE'LL TAKE HIM TO
TERRAS SURFACE FOR
BURIAL, AS HE WISHED.



THE SPECTROGATOR SHOWS: A LOT OF
CARBON DIOXIDE, NITROGEN, WATER, ARGON
... AND SOME OXYGEN. TEMPERATURE AT
OUR TARGET LOCATION: 185 DEGREES F.
WE'LL NEED SPACE SUITS! ... AND THE
DIGGER.





A COVER PAINTING FOR *FEVER DREAMS* (1972), A STORY WRITTEN BY JAN STRNAD AND ILLUSTRATED BY CORBEN. IT CONCERNS A BEETLE-LIKE SPACESHIP AND ITS STRANGE INHABITANTS, FRIERSON AND MEADE. FRIERSON IS A DEFORMED CRIPPLE, BUT THE ROBOT, MEADE, PROJECTS AN ILLUSORY REALITY IN WHICH HE APPEARS AS A HANDSOME LOVER SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

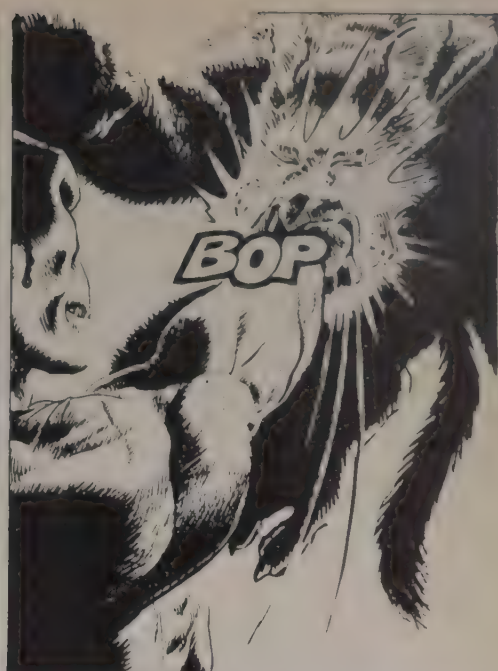
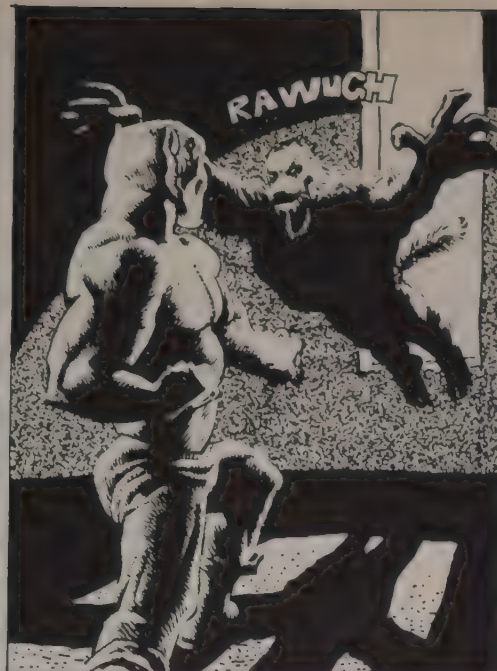


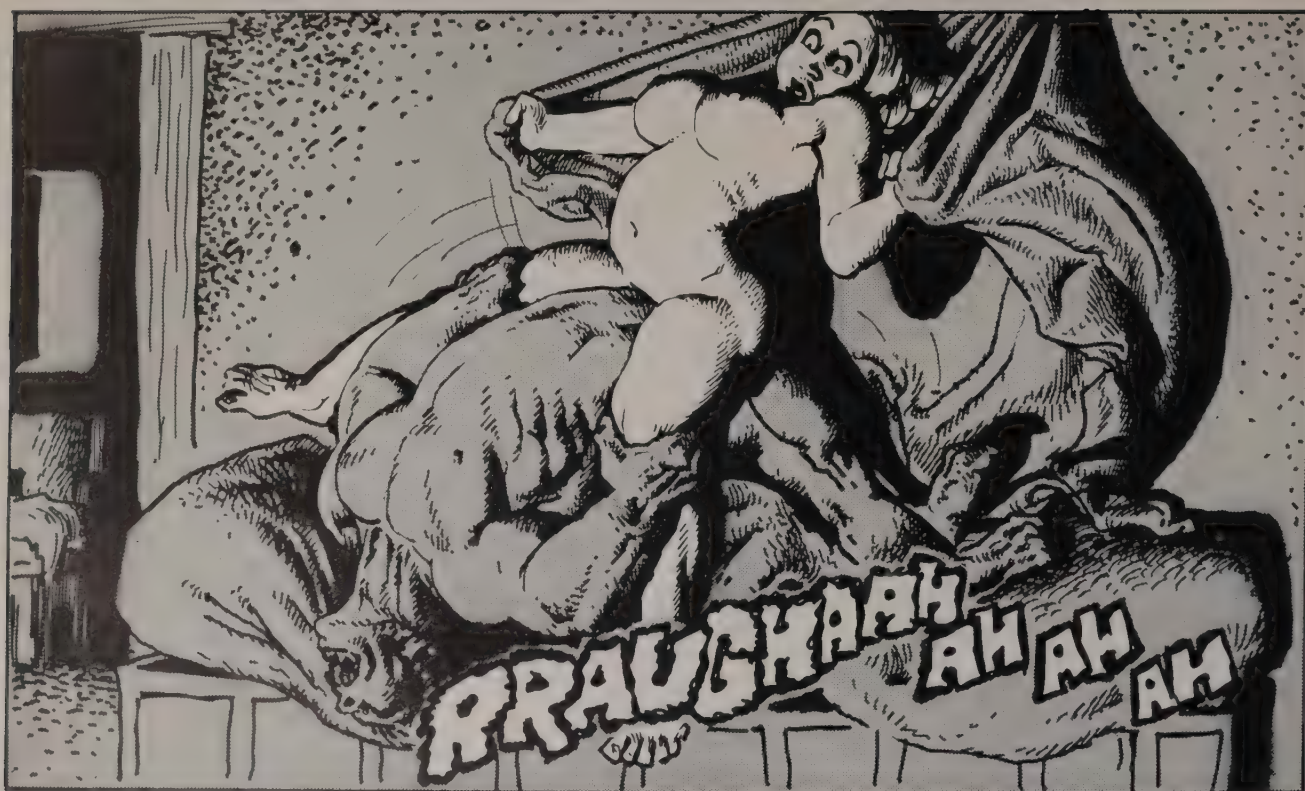
THIS PANEL FROM *DEN* SHOWS THE EFFECTIVE WAY IN WHICH CORBEN BALANCES FANTASY WITH REALITY. THE HYPER-REALISM OF HIS HUMAN FIGURES CONTRASTS WELL WITH THE FANTASY SETTING AND LENDS AUTHENTICITY TO HIS IMAGINARY WORLD. THE PICTURE IS A COLLAGE OF HAND-PAINTED IMAGES, WITH A CHEMICALLY COLOURED PHOTOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND. FROM: *METAL HURLANT* 5 (1976)



ABOVE: COVER TO ROWLF (1971), A FULL-LENGTH COMIC BOOK STORY. INITIALLY PLANNED AS AN ANIMATED FILM, IT CONCERNS A DOG WHO IS CHANGED INTO A MAN-BEAST AND LOYALLY RESCUES HIS MISTRESS FROM THE CLUTCHES OF EVIL.

OPPOSITE: THE INFLUENCE OF FILM ANIMATION ON CORBEN'S NARRATIVE STYLE CAN BE SEEN IN THIS PAGE FROM ROWLF: THE ACTION IS BROUGHT CLOSER TO THE SPECTATOR AS ROWLF LEAPS AT HIS ADVERSARY, AND IT IS INTERCUT WITH THE GIRL'S FACE TO HEIGHTEN THE DRAMA OF THE ENSUING BATTLE.





ABOVE: A PANEL FROM *THE BEAST OF WOLFTON*, A TALE OF A WEREWOLF SET IN MEDIEVAL TIMES. NOTE CORBEN'S USE OF LIGHT AND SHADOW TO GIVE ROUNDNESS AND WEIGHT TO HIS FIGURES. FROM: *GRIMWIT 1* (1972)

OPPOSITE: BACK COVER PAINTING FOR *ENCOUNTER AT WAR*, ANOTHER STORY BY JAN STRNAD. FROM: *ANOMALY 4* (1972)







ABOVE: COVER ILLUSTRATION FOR A STORY CALLED *MUTANT WORLD*

OPPOSITE: A CORBEN POSTER ENTITLED *MIDNIGHT BATTLE*. THE FACE OF THE MALE FIGURE RESEMBLES THE ARTIST'S

While his comic book contemporaries were plundering cinematic and illustrative techniques to incorporate into their work, Smith was absorbing himself into the purely decorative world of Art Nouveau.

At this stage he was originating the comic book version of 1930s pulp-writer Robert E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian*, for Marvel. Conan was a brawling, swashbuckling barbarian who battled his way across a prehistoric world of swordplay and wizardry and, on the face of it, there was a clear need for an artist with a robust, dynamic style to translate Howard's headlong prose into comic book pictures. Smith, however, largely rejected the action-adventure approach and imbued the series with his own unique elaboration of the Art Nouveau ideal, creating a world of delicately structured towers, secret walled gardens, and resplendent palaces with graceful furnishings and exquisite mosaics – a world of florid ornamentation and elegant design. Yet pace and drama were by no means lacking in his *Conan*. Visual excitement was often generated by sequences of long narrow frames. The central character could be presented either in the foreground, the midground or the background, and a combination of the three had the urgency of a succession of brutal jump-cuts in a film (though the technique itself was not cinematic). Then, with startling force there would appear a half- or even full-page closeup of ferocious action. To the average comic book buyer, grown blasé with dynamic spectacle in every frame, and characters for ever sprawling across the page, Smith's approach was fresh and original. Here was discipline, the discipline of working within the classic 'square box' frame and yet still creating an intense visual experience.

Working full-time over a period of three and a half years, Smith drew only twenty-one monthly *Conan* comics. Two other stories featuring the same character appeared elsewhere. As a body of work this was slim, yet many of the books remain classics of their kind.

However much artistic freedom and control over plots Smith had, he was not satisfied with merely drawing other people's stories. He was already, in the later *Conan* books, beginning to see each comic book as a unified whole (even if the story itself was in serial form), and he was soon at the stage where he was designing each page as a separate unit within the framework of the book, with each panel seen as a single moment of frozen time. In the light of this, his withdrawal from comics and entry into poster art was a logical step. He was also gradually moving away from Mucha's dominating influence and becoming more and more involved with the mid-nineteenth-century coterie of British artists known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

The Pre-Raphaelites had less in common with each other than is popularly supposed, and although outwardly their main object was to simplify and purify art, each had his own personal vision of how this could and should be achieved. The cerebral approach to the problem was taken by William Holman Hunt, whose paintings were statements of highly elaborated symbolism, open to a number of interpretations. Smith was drawn to Hunt. The discipline of

presenting intellectual and moral ideas visually had for some time excited him, and Hunt's philosophy became an extension of his own.

Smith's early posters were to a certain extent still orientated towards comics and Conan. A notable success was *The Ram and the Peacock* of 1974 which, on the surface showed Conan in a sinister garden, standing over an evil goat-headed sorcerer whom he has just slain. On closer inspection the sorcerer is clearly portrayed in a sympathetic light: he weeps tears of blood; his garden abounds in symbols of tranquillity and peace. It is in fact Conan, the comic book hero, who is evil for having killed the sorcerer simply because he was 'different'.

One of the most fascinating of the early pictures was the large-scale *Judgement of the Dead by the Living* (1974), an allegory on life after death. In many ways this is a failure, but it does make the point more strongly than anything else that Smith is not interested in merely painting pictures that offer nothing after the initial impact.

Since 1974 his work has become more complex and enigmatic and less easy to interpret on a simple level. Even the outwardly simple *Whithering* of 1975, a pen and ink drawing of a semi-transparent skeletal figure seen against a background of trees, comes across as no mere visual splash. The viewer is suddenly aware that the trees are all dying, that the figure drifting by them is in fact on fire, scorching the ground as he passes over it. None of this is immediately apparent.

Smith's paintings do not satisfy. On the contrary, they challenge and stimulate, pose questions to which there are no easy answers and cause the viewer continually to re-evaluate earlier opinions. In his latest picture, *Fate Sowing the Stars* (1978), a rich and sumptuous allegory in the High Renaissance manner, he has extended his range to the point where there is hardly any link at all with his comic book past. The work he has left behind, however, is an important contribution to the medium and even more influential today than when it was first produced.

Barry Windsor-Smith's artistic approach is also found among the leading exponents of the 'new comic' in France. They are a generation of young artists who view their medium primarily as a vehicle for self-expression, and they are concerned with projecting a personal vision of the world. If film is the prose of the electronic age, comics are the poetry. It is an attitude which has found fertile ground in a country which not only loves comics but takes them seriously. The French have a tradition, similar to the English, of comic book magazines which contain different strips serialized over many issues. Their public, however, is very different. They have a sophisticated and critical readership that extends beyond the juvenile market. The artists are not bound by the same commercial constraints and are therefore more interested in conveying their own message to the public. Their work is often collected in expensive hardcover volumes and reprinted in full colour on quality art paper. A few (CONTINUED ON PAGE 66)

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH

British comic book and poster artist. Born: London, 1949. Principal works: 1968-74 comic book features in *Avengers*, *Astonishing Tales*, and *Conan the Barbarian* for Marvel Comics; 1974 founded Gorblimey Press where he continues to publish his own portfolios and prints.



ABOVE: THOUGH SMITH'S COMIC BOOK WORLD WAS ESSENTIALLY AN ELABORATION OF THE ART NOUVEAU IDEAL, DRAMA AND EXPLOSIVE ACTION WERE BY NO MEANS LACKING. FROM: *RED NAILS*, MARVEL TREASURY: *CONAN THE BARBARIAN* (1975)

OPPOSITE: IT WAS SAID THAT SMITH'S CONAN LACKED THE SAVAGERY OF THE ORIGINAL BARBARIAN CHARACTER IN ROBERT E. HOWARD'S STORIES. FROM: *BARRY SMITH'S TUPENNY CONAN* (1974)

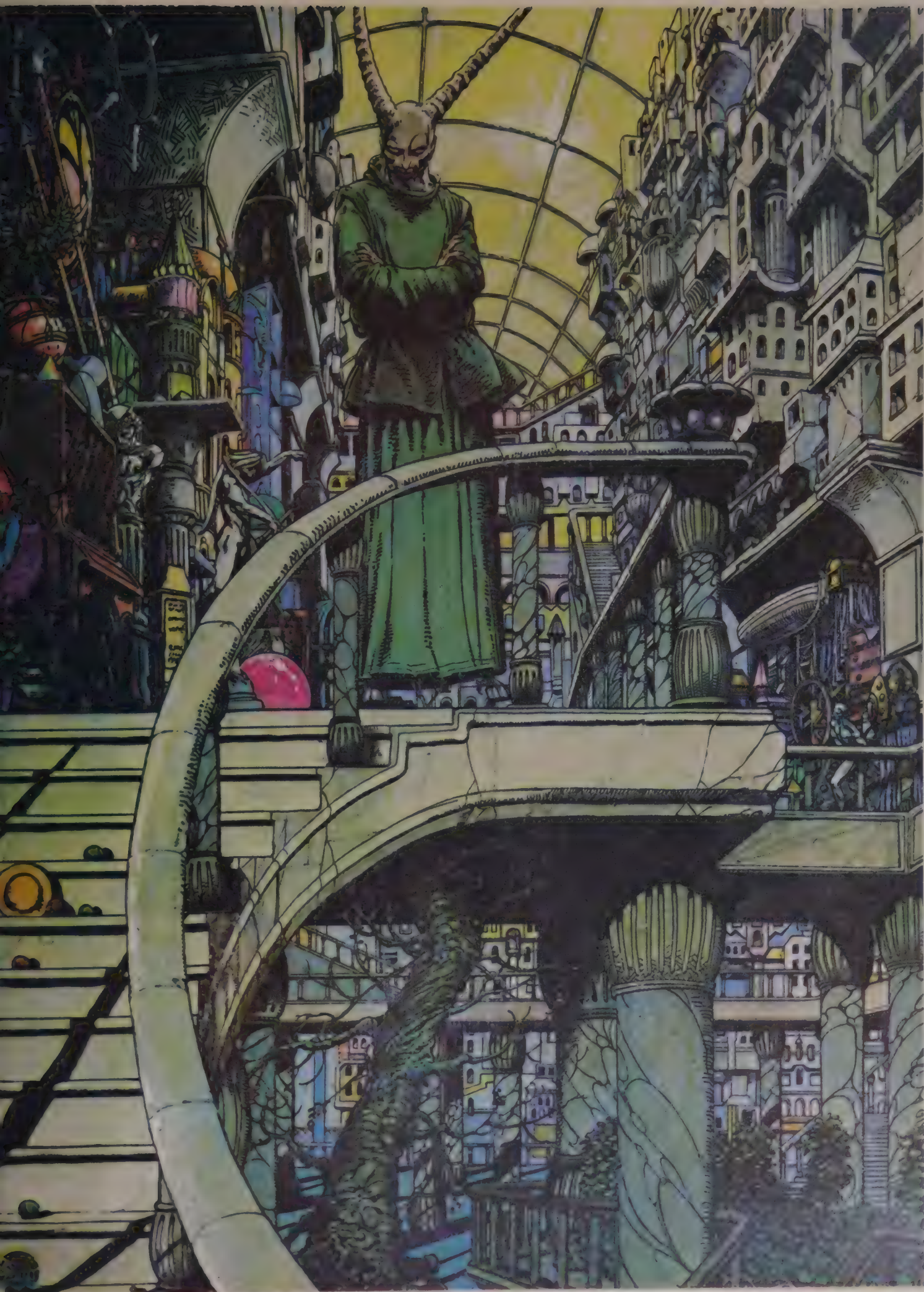




ABOVE: TYPICAL OF THE SYMBOLISM TO BE FOUND IN SMITH'S LATER COMIC BOOK WORK IS THIS PUPPET LYING ON THE TABLE BESIDE THE SHATTERING MIRROR. CONAN, FLEEING FROM A SORCERER IN THE STORY, IS IN FACT DOING EXACTLY WHAT THE SORCERER WANTS. FROM: *THE BLACK HOUND OF VENGEANCE*, *CONAN THE BARBARIAN* 20 (NOV 1972)

OPPOSITE: AMIDST THE LUMBER CLUTTERING THOTH AMON'S STRANGE ABODE CAN BE SEEN SYMBOLS THAT APPEAR FREQUENTLY IN SMITH'S WORK: A LYRE, A BOAT, A PRISM. THERE IS EVEN A MINIATURE PANDORA! IT IS ONLY AFTER SOME TIME THAT THE VIEWER REALIZES THE WIZARD IS STANDING ON THIN AIR. FROM: *FIVE ROBERT E. HOWARD CHARACTERS* (1975)

PAGES 60-1: ONE OF SMITH'S MOST DISTURBING WORKS, *THE BOOK OF SAMOTHRACE* (1977) IS CLAUSTROPHOBIC IN THE EXTREME. THE SKULL SIGNIFIES DEATH, THE OWL WISDOM; BUT WHY IS THE BOOK EXPLODING INTO FLAMES, WHAT SIGNIFICANCE HAS THE PINNED-UP ROSSETTI POEM, AND HOW IS IT LINKED WITH THE ENIGMATIC PHRASE CARVED INTO THE IVORY SEAT?







ABOVE: *PANDORA* (1975) IS PROBABLY SMITH'S MOST SUCCESSFUL PRINT TO DATE, MAINLY BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OBJECTS IN IT TO ENGAGE THE VIEWER'S ATTENTION, RANGING FROM THE STATUE OF GRENDEL WITH A LYRE TO A BRITISH £1 NOTE AND A JAR OF MARMITE.

OPPOSITE: THE INTENSITY OF PULP-WRITER ROBERT E. HOWARD'S BETTER FICTION IS CAPTURED HERE IN THIS BROODING STUDY OF THE PICTISH KING, BRAN MAK MORN. FROM: *FIVE ROBERT E. HOWARD CHARACTERS* (1975)





AN EXERCISE IN PURE DESIGN. THE HALF-MOON WROUGHT IRONWORK IS A RECURRING MOTIF THAT CAN BE FOUND IN SMITH'S WORK AS FAR BACK AS *DAREDEVIL* 52 (MAY 1969). FROM: BARRY SMITH'S *TUPENNY CONAN* (1974)



THE DEVIL'S LAKE (1975). BEAUTY ENSNARED BY CLUTCHING EVIL.
SYMBOLIC IMAGERY IS USED TO SUGGEST HOPELESSNESS AND DESPAIR.

comic strip artists, such as Jean Giraud and Philippe Druillet, have become so popular through their books that they are considered celebrities in their own right.

Jean Giraud is better known by his pseudonyms Gir and Moebius. Gir is the well-paid, highly professional illustrator of *Lieutenant Blueberry*, one of France's most successful Western strips, running for over fifteen years in the weekly comic magazine *Pilote*. Moebius is the widely acclaimed graphic fantasy artist who creates science fiction worlds that pose metaphysical questions and comment wryly on the state of human culture. The two personas of Giraud complement one another nicely. The skills of Gir, gained through a rigorous training in the craft of comics, give substance to the inspirations of Moebius, and Moebius, liberating the imagination, adds life and dimension to the popular work of Gir.

Giraud, born in Paris in 1938, became addicted to the comic at a young age. He lived in a world of comic book characters and sketched their cartoon figures ferociously throughout his adolescence. His studies at the Institute of Applied Art, although disturbing his notions of aesthetics and giving a more critical perspective to his enthusiasm, did nothing to diminish his passion for the medium. He did his first comic strip, a Western entitled *The Adventures of Franck and Jérémie*, when he was still at school. Later he drew a number of didactic tales for the catholic publication *Coeurs Vaillants* (Stout Hearts), but his true apprenticeship was gained under Joseph Gillian, a respected cartoonist popularly known as Jijé. He worked for a year as Jijé's assistant on the adventure series *Jerry Spring* until he was offered a lucrative job illustrating books for the short-lived Studio Hachette. At about the same time he started producing his first fantasy strips as Moebius for the satirical monthly *Hara Kiri*. These were classic horror tales in the best tradition of the early EC comics. Giraud was the first European to take up such themes as Frankenstein, Dracula and the Werewolf, and he treated the conventions and stereotypes of the genre with a caustic humour that was often devastating. In 1963 he joined forces with Jean-Michel Charlier on another adventure series entitled *Fort Navajo*, which a year later became the first of the famous *Lieutenant Blueberry* strips.

Lieutenant Blueberry recounts the adventures of a US cavalry officer stationed at Fort Navajo in the wilderness of New Mexico. He usually travels without his regiment, making lone forays against Apaches, gun-runners and other adversaries in the company of a grizzled old drunk called McClure. Giraud creates his own peculiarly French version of the West. His scrupulous, detailed and precise graphic style is concerned with faithfully rendering a strange world. Like Kurtzman, he has researched his subject well, immersing himself in photographs of the period and Remington's classic paintings of the Old West, and the background details have an air of authenticity about them. He even borrows Remington's colours – the turquoise blue skies and ochre landscapes that give the sense of a sun-scorched world invaded with dust. Blueberry is a modern anti-hero, brutal and unwashed, whose major virtues are his

vulnerability, cynicism and ironic sense of humour. Giraud pictures a harsh world where the absence of law and the hostility of nature serve as a backdrop for violence and greed. Yet his West is still the symbol of freedom – in this case the freedom from all the artificial constraints of an old culture. Herein lies its fascination for both Giraud and his French audience.

In his early work on *Lieut Blueberry*, Giraud displayed a style reminiscent of Kurtzman. As well as the attention to detail, there was the lettering of sound-effects over his drawings and the use of the 'fixed camera' panel as a method of unfolding time. Here a number of panels drawn from the same viewpoint allow a figure to advance into the frame. Later he developed a technique of very loose inking which suited his subject-matter well. The characters look knocked about, and the shading, executed with a brush, gives their faces a weathered look. As Gir, he is concerned with the sequential flow of narration. He uses film montage techniques and occasional washes of colour over a whole page to accentuate the drama. As *Moebius*, the style alters noticeably. Colour is used very richly and decoratively, as in the examples from *Arzak* on pages 72-4. The layout of the page is more open and varied, and a short action sequence may be interposed with a single panel covering two pages. The drawing is freer and more cartoon-like and yet shaded with meticulous, fine line pen work. It relates to a private world of pure fantasy where the people, objects and general landscape are mutations of objective reality.

La Deviation (The Detour), produced in 1973, marked a turning point in Giraud's fantasy strips. It was an autobiographical piece depicting him and his wife on an imaginary car trip into the realm of the future. Instead of having strange events taking place in a normal world as in the earlier horror stories, he disturbed the perspectives of the outside world to correspond to an inner landscape of emotion and fantasy. The 'new comic' was born. His later science fiction work simply elaborates the same idea on a grander scale.

Giraud has been a seminal force in the recent development of the medium. He was one of the founders of *Metal Hurlant* which quickly became the organ of a whole new movement in graphic fantasy. The magazine, with its recent American offshoot *Heavy Metal*, is extending his influence still further. As a result, Giraud's work, along with that of Corben and Druillet, has begun to redefine the traditional notions of the comic book.

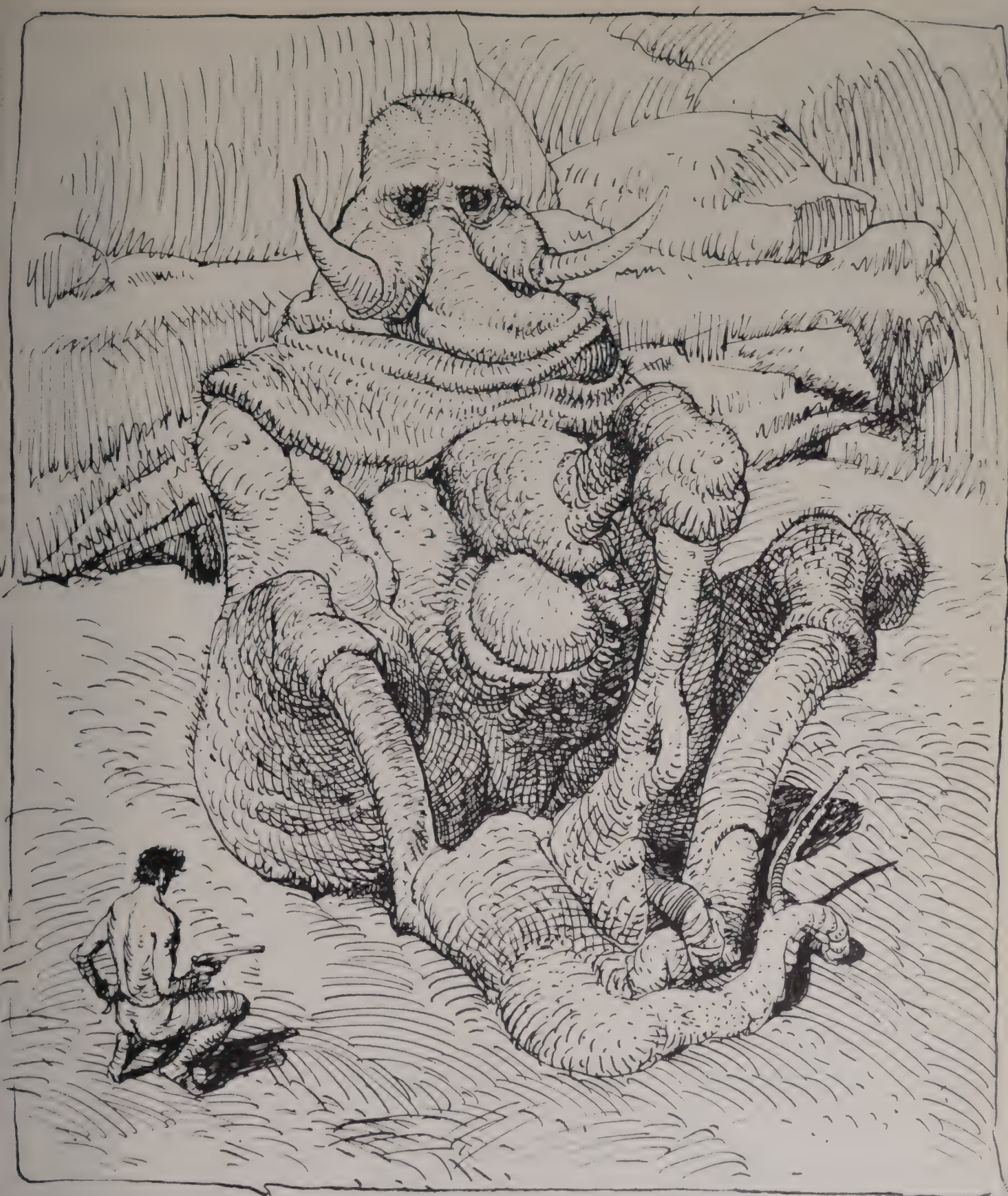
Giraud and Druillet are companions in the same cause. They have worked together and influenced one another. As two of the partners in an artist-run company aptly called *Les Humanoïdes Associés* (The Associated Humanoids), they also publish all their own science fiction books. If at times they seem to inhabit an identical world, they are nevertheless different in temperament. Giraud is an insolent jester, subtle, incisive, ironic and often outrageous. **Philippe Druillet** is a tragic poet of the apocalypse. He presents a fervent, grandiose, nightmarish vision of a universe gone mad. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 76)

JEAN GIRAUD

French comic book artist, illustrator and publisher. Born: Paris, 1938. Pseudonyms: Gir, Moebius. Principal works: from 1963 comic strip serial *Lieutenant Blueberry*; 1973 *La Deviation*; 1975 co-founded magazine *Metal Hurlant*; 1975-7 strips *Arzach*, *The Long Tomorrow*, *L'Univers est bien petit* (The Universe is Very Small), *L'homme est-il bon?* (Is Man Good?)



A SIMIAN CREATURE FROM THE COVER OF METAL HURLANT 4 (1975). THIS SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE WAS THE BRAINCHILD OF GIRAUD, DRUILLET, DIONNET AND FARKAS. COLLECTIVELY KNOWN AS LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES.



THIS STRANGE ALIEN COMES FROM THE PAGES OF METAL HURLANT'S 1976. NOTE THE DIFFERENT TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED IN THIS LOOSELY WORKED ILLUSTRATION COMPARED WITH THE DETAILED LIFUT BLUEBERRY DRAWINGS OVERLEAF.

BELOW: A PAGE FROM FORT NAVAJO (1970), GIRAUD'S AWARD-WINNING STRIP FEATURING LIEUT. BLUEBERRY, WHICH HAS BEEN RUNNING IN PILOTE SINCE 1964.



OPPOSITE: A STRIKING COVER PAINTING FOR ANOTHER LIEUT. BLUEBERRY ADVENTURE, CHIHUAHUA PEARL (1973) WHICH WAS REPRINTED IN HARBCK

PORT NAVAJO

une Aventure du Lieutenant BLUEBERRY

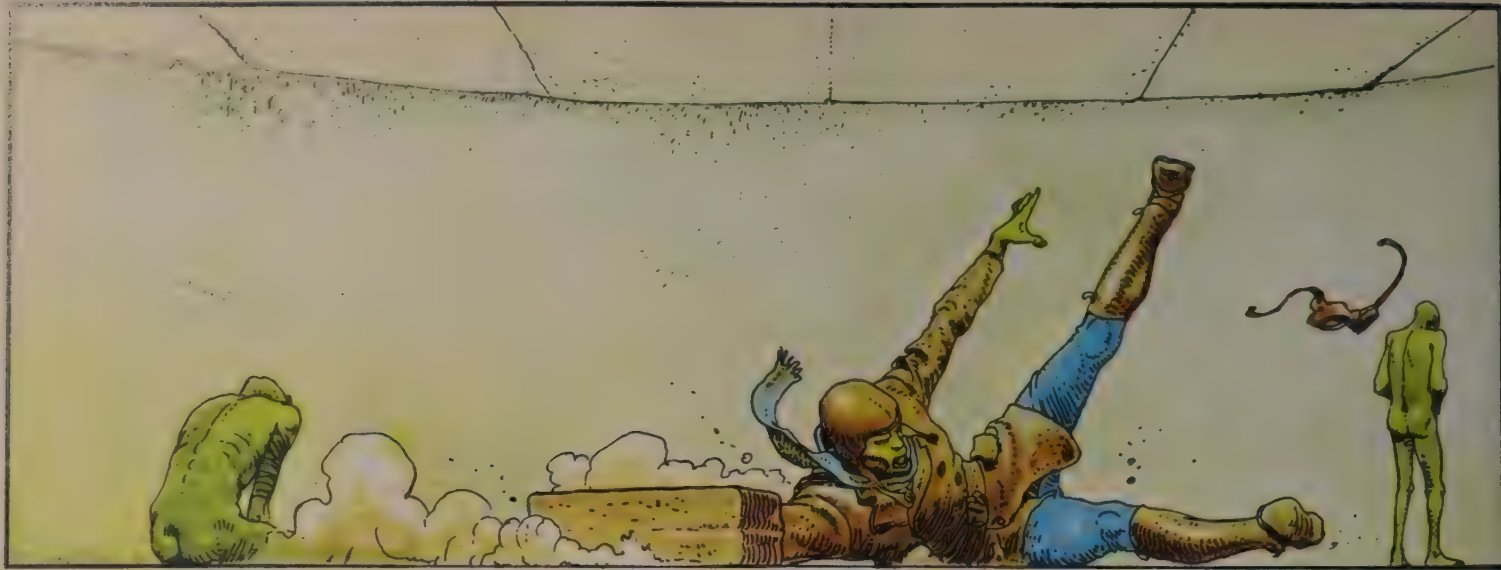
CHIHUAHUA PEARL

TEXTE DE CHARLIER
Dessins DE GIRAUD











PAGES 72-4: PAGES FROM THE ADVENTURES OF ARZAK, A STRIP WHICH FIRST APPEARED IN *METAL HURLANT*. IT IS UNUSUAL IN THAT GIRAUD USES ONLY PICTURES TO NARRATE THE STORY. THERE ARE NO WORDS IN THE WHOLE SERIES. ARZAK'S ADVENTURES INVOLVE AN AIMLESS FLIGHT THROUGH A BIZARRE WORLD OF GIGANTIC BONES, REPTILIAN ANIMALS AND CARNIVOROUS VEGETATION.

ABOVE: AN ILLUSTRATION FROM *LA DEVIATION* OF 1973. THE STORY WHICH MARKS THE FUSION OF GIRAUD'S EARLY STYLES AND POINTS THE WAY TO HIS WORK IN *METAL HURLANT*. FOR NEARLY TEN YEARS GIRAUD HAD BEEN DRAWING THE CAREFULLY RESEARCHED LIEUT. BLUEBERRY AND, AS HIS OTHER SELF MOEBIUS, A FANTASY WORLD OF SUPERSTITION AND MYTH. WHILE *LA DEVIATION* IS SET IN A FANTASY WORLD, IT IS BASED ON AN ACTUAL JOURNEY WHICH THE ARTIST TOOK WITH HIS WIFE, AND IT COMMENTS ON HIS WORK AND LIFE. FROM: *GIR* (1974)

His work is intensely personal. At once brilliant and chaotic, inventive and obscure, it astonishes by the sheer explosive power of its imagery.

Druillet was not trained originally as a comic book artist. Unlike Giraud he did not practise his craft among professionals and therefore did not possess the particular skills of the trade that would have allowed him to realise his ideas with ease. Druillet received no formal art training; he began work as a photographer, teaching himself to draw in his spare time. Comics had fascinated him as a child and, like Giraud, he had a natural flair for cartooning. He decided to proceed on his own until he was ready to present his work to an audience. In 1965 he met Eric Losfeld, who agreed to publish his first effort in book form. The story was called *The Mystery of the Abyss* and was the first adventure of his famous hero Lone Sloane. The line drawings were sketchy and lacked dimension, but the principal conceptions of his later work were already vividly present and revealed a tempestuous talent for graphic design. Druillet began illustrating a number of covers and stories for science fiction magazines, and despite a barrage of insulting letters, his reputation grew. It was not until he joined the art staff of the comic magazine *Pilote* in 1970, however, that he began to come into his own. There he revived the adventures of Lone Sloane, refining his technique and reworking many of his initial ideas.

Druillet's stories involve epic battles of good and evil. They portray primeval forces of order and chaos locked in titanic struggles for supremacy, and, as they nearly always end in death and destruction, the powers of evil seem naturally stronger. Lone Sloane, as his name implies, is a solitary figure, an exile from his home, his people and his planet, condemned to wander for ever among alien creatures of space. In the beginning Sloane is merely a spectator, one who only wishes to be left alone. But, finding that he must defend himself time and again amidst the storms of conflict, he inevitably becomes a participant. In later tales his character comes into sharper focus: he is a mercenary, a savage indomitable figure who serves only himself and the causes that suit him at the moment. He has become a symbol of modern man, imprisoned in his individuality, divorced from his natural surroundings, wondering whether there is a purpose to his existence.

Druillet, like Corben and other contemporary artists, shows a basic disillusionment with mankind. His characters whether human or alien are selfish, cruel and bent on destroying their world. His stories, set in the form of parables about lust and greed, often provide scathing critiques on the nature of our society. In *The Six Voyages of Lone Sloane* the hero sets out to spread the influence of mankind among the stars, only to discover upon returning from his long odyssey that there are no men left, only monsters. In the next book, *Delirius* (extracts shown on pages 79-81), Sloane finds himself in a decadent world where pleasure is a taxable commodity and the main source of revenue for the ruler of the planet. Repelled by the structure of this society, he joins an underground movement that seeks to recover the amassed treasure and so end the ruler's

reign. They succeed only at the cost of total warfare. In the course of the battle the treasure rains down from the sky and each individual, forgetting the struggle, fights to grab the money from his neighbour. The planet of Delirius is destroyed in the ensuing chaos.

If Druillet's vision is bleak, there are also moments of great lyricism. *The Night*, produced soon after the death of the artist's wife Nicole in 1975, is a moving allegory of love's power to transcend death. The forces of darkness, symbolized by hordes of hell's angel space cyclists, govern a bizarre world devoted to the ritualistic destruction of order. They reign throughout the long night but, with the approach of day, a beautiful woman appears on the horizon, her face like the morning sun, to vanquish evil with the forces of light.

Druillet uses very little of the accepted language of comics. He is not concerned with sequential narration and his books are experienced page by page rather than read from panel to panel. Each page is a grandiose poster, a symbolic graphic image, vividly coloured and filled with a wealth of minute detail. Druillet builds up his pictures slowly and painstakingly. Like Bellamy, he sketches the initial design in pencil and gradually fills it in with layer upon layer of ink and paint. The text is added later within the context of the picture, and the story is then deduced by studying the image as a whole. Druillet has drawn on many sources for his inspiration, from the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft, with its mythology of space gods and its notion of reality as a curtain which some can see through, to the drawings of Maurits Escher, the Dutch artist whose geometric forms Druillet borrows for his fantastic machinery. In the final analysis, however, his creations are very much his own. They are like volcanic eruptions of the unconscious which are only barely contained by the disciplines of the medium. They are the very stuff that dreams are made on; whether fascinating or appalling, they never fail to be impressive.

In order to appreciate the new science fiction comics it is important to understand how they developed. The roots of the tradition are in America. America, with its technology of the future, its gadgets and its space programmes, is the natural home of science fiction. The best early work in comics can be found, not surprisingly, in the science fiction of William Gaines's *Entertaining Comics*. **Wally Wood** was the main science fiction illustrator at EC from the beginning of the fifties until they closed their doors in 1956. A prolific artist who had a very varied career in comics extending over thirty years, Wood was renowned at EC for his remarkable ability to interpret science fiction literature. He had a particular feel for Ray Bradbury stories or tales which dealt with paradoxes of time and space and had amusing social or philosophical twists to them: earth as the dumping ground for criminals, the human race as the freaks of the universe, inhabiting a galactic zoo. One of the best renditions of Bradbury by Wood was the short story *There Will Come Soft Rains*. The opening panel shows a wall with white silhouettes of children (CONTINUED ON PAGE 90)

PHILIPPE DRUILLET

French comic book artist, illustrator and publisher. Born: Toulouse, 1944. Principal works: 1967-77 comic strip books *Lone Sloane*, *The Six Voyages of Lone Sloane*, *Delirius*, *Yragael or the End of Time*, *Urm the Fool*, *Vuzz*, *The Night*, *Mirages*; 1975 co-founded *Metal Hurlant* magazine.



LIKE A MALEVOLENT WIZARD DRUILLET INVITES US TO RECONSIDER ARCHETYPAL THEMES OF GOOD AND EVIL WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HIS UNIVERSE.

ABOVE: A PANEL FROM *VUZZ* (1976), THE WORK WHICH COMES CLOSEST TO BEING A CONVENTIONAL NARRATIVE. MOST OF HIS STORIES ARE EXPERIENCED PAGE BY PAGE RATHER THAN READ FROM PANEL TO PANEL.

OPPOSITE: THE PALACE OF MAURITS ESCHER, A TRIBUTE TO THE DUTCH ARTIST WHOSE OPTICAL ILLUSIONS AND FANTASTIC FORMS DRUILLET HAS ADAPTED TO HIS OWN SCIENCE FICTION REALM. FROM *DELIRIUS* (1973)

PAGES 80-3: TWO DOUBLE-PAGE SPREADS FROM *DELIRIUS*, AN ALLEGORICAL TALE OF GREED AND CORRUPTION. SEE *DELIRIUS* AND *DIE*, THE PLANET WHERE PLEASURE IS A TAXABLE COMMODITY AND GIGANTIC TEMPLES DWARF AN ALIEN RACE OF MONSTERS.

PAGES 84-5: THE BRIDGE OF THE STARS IN THE REALM OF TORQUEDARA VARENKOR. DRUILLET PUNCTUATES HIS APOCALYPTIC VISIONS WITH PICTORIAL CREATIONS OF SURREAL BEAUTY. FROM: *THE SIX ADVENTURES OF LONE SLOANE* (1972)

C'EST LE PALAIS D'ÉCHIER L'UNE DES PLUS
VIEILLES ATTRACTIONS DE BELGIUM BASÉE SUR
LE PRINCIPLE DE LA MULTIPERSONNE ET DU
DÉPLACEMENT OPTIQUE.

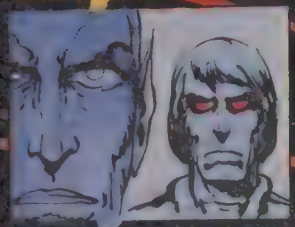
ON DIT QUE SA CONSTRUCTION A ÉTÉ INSPIRÉE PAR
L'ŒUVRE D'UN CERTAIN ALBERIC DE LA PER OUI
PARCÉLÉ DES JOURS D'ÉTÉ. CET ENVOI D'UNE
CONSTRUCTION STABILISABLE SUR LA PLANE
NAPLE, QUAND J'ÉTAIS GOSSE.

TOUS LES GÂMINS DU COIN S'Y DONNAIENT
RENDEZ-VOUS. ON S'AMUSAIT DES JOURNÉES
ENTIÈRES À SE POURSUIVRE COMME DES
POUS D'UN PLAN À L'AUTRE...



...MÈRES AVANT LU, L'ONE SLOANE
...LONGTEMPS DE L'ÉBLOUISSANT
...SPECTACLE QUE L'ON DÉCOU-
...ROCHANT DE DELIRIUS. LA PLANÈ-
...ÈME EST ÉCLIPSÉE PAR UNE PARU-
...INANTE COMPOSÉE DE SATELLITES
...PRÉCIEUX, SEMBLABLES À DES
...MONUMENTAUX ORGUELLEUSEMENT
...ET SERTIS DE JOYAUX TAILLÉS À
...L'ÉCHELLE CÉLESTE !...

LA PLANÈTE FOLLE
S'EMPLOIE À BIEN SER-
VIR SA RÉPUTATION...
MAIS IL NE FAUT PAS
S'Y TROMPER: TOUTE
CETTE QUINCAILLERIE
FÉERIQUE ET TAPA-
GEUSE DISSIMULE UN
RÉSEAU EFFICACE DE
DÉFENSE ET DE DÉTEC-
TION. CHACUN DE CES
"BIJOUX" ABRITE UNE
PUISSANTE MACHINE
DE GUERRE !...





ET MAINTENANT QUE
COMPTEZ-VOUS FAIRE?
NOUS VENDRE UNE
SECONDE FOIS?

NOUS AVONS RÉELLEMENT L'INTENTION DE
RENDRE À LA POLICE, NOUS N'AURONS PAS PRIS





...NE DE FAVORISER VOTRE ÉVA-
... DES PRISONS DE L'ASTROPORT!

QUOI? C'EST
VOUS QUI?...
LES NOUS SÉBON

J'E SUIS SUR QUE TON AMI
L'AVAIT DÉJÀ DEVINÉ...
POUFFES VOUS RENSEIGNERONT
AU GRAND TEMPLE

J'Y AI PENSÉ EN EFFET. EN DEHORS DES AUTORI-
TÉS, PERSONNE D'AUTRE QUE VOUS NE CONNAIS-
SAIT NOTRE PRÉSENCE SUR DELIRIUS.
EUX-MÊMES SI TEL-
EST LEUR DESIR.
DANS QUELQUES MINUTES.

MAIS POURQUOI NOUS SI
AVOIR DÉNONCÉS SI
C'ÉTAIT POUR NOUS
RÉCUPÉRER ENSUITE?

JE NE CONNAIS PAS LES
ORIGINES DE LA RÉDEMPTION.
QUI EST KHARMAN?

LE GRAND TEMPLE DE
KHARMAN, BERCEAU ET
SANCTUAIRE DE LA
RÉDEMPTION ROUGE!
LE TEMPLE EST ÉDIFIÉ
SUR LES LIEUX MÊMES
DU MASSACRE DES
FLAMBOYANTS ET SA
FLAMME MIRACULEUSE
COMMÉMORE LE
MARTYRE DE
KHARMAN.

TORQUEDA

LE FONT



VARENKOR

ETOILES



EN CE TEMPS LÀ, SUR LA ROUTE QUI MENAIT AUX GALAXIES TERRESTRES, SE DRESSAIENT LES MURAILLES TITANESQUES DU PONT SUR LES ETOILES, LE ROYAUME DE TORQUEDARA VARENKOR - TORQUEDARA AVAIT UN GRAND DEFAUT, IL S'ENNUYAIT TOUJOURS, ALORS POUR SE DIVERTIR, LE SULTAN SORCIER RANÇONNAIT LES VOYAGEURS, LEUR VOLANT LEUR ÂME APRÈS LES AVOIR PROJÉTÉS DANS UN JEU COSMIQUE DE SON INVENTION.









PAGES 86-7 AND OPPOSITE: *THE KNIGHT OF DAWN* AND *THE PRINCE OF A THOUSAND FORMS*, TWO POSTERS PRODUCED IN 1975 WHICH SHOWED DRUILLET'S WORK ON A MUCH LARGER SCALE THAN BEFORE. THE ANIMAL-MACHINE HYBRID IS TYPICAL OF THE DISTURBING CREATURES THAT PEOPLE DRUILLET'S WORLD.

ABOVE: *HAMILTON POTEKINE* (1975), ONE OF DRUILLET'S HUMOROUS PIECES. POTEKINE, MAROONED ON THE PLANET PHONGE II AT THE END OF THE END OF EVERYWHERE, ENCOUNTERS AN ALIEN CREATURE. EACH SEES THE OTHER AS FOOD.

playing ball and a man mowing his garden. They seem at first to be shadows, but they are in fact the charred remains of an atomic explosion. There is no one left, only a mechanized house keeps functioning on its own. A talking clock tells when it is time to get up, and little robot mice act as servants. A fire breaks out in the attic. The mechanical mice try to stop it, but somehow it rages out of control and the house burns down. The talking clock, now broken, is left to call out the hour of the house's destruction over and over again. Wood was marvellous at depicting imaginary worlds that seem palpably real. His intricate, utterly believable machinery, startling monsters, and intriguing settings on alien planets, along with the consistently high standard of his artwork, made him the acknowledged master of the genre.

Wood entered the comics industry as a letterer, worked his way up to assisting established artists, and then became a freelance illustrator for several comic book companies before joining the regular staff at EC. He spent some of his early days in Will Eisner's studio, and both he and Jules Feiffer inked in the drawings for many of the *Spirit* stories. In 1950 he drew his own episode entitled *Denny Colt in Outer Space* which lasted for three Sundays and showed how well he had mastered the Eisner technique. Even today a careful comparison of their styles reveals points of similarity: the same cool, clean lines and careful balance of light and shade. Later he came under the influence of Kurtzman's editorship at EC where he worked on the war comics and *Mad* as well as on the science fiction line. Kurtzman imbued him with the tradition of research, sending him out to libraries to gather information for the strips, and gave him a concern for detail which helped to make his artwork distinctive. The early issues of *Mad*, with their wonderfully cluttered panels filled with jokes and sight gags and outlandish machinery, owe much to Wood's inventiveness. Under Kurtzman's direction he created many of the famous lampoons on comics, such as *Teddy and the Pirates*, *Black and Blue Hawks*, *Bat Boy and Ruben*, *Flesh Gardon* and, of course, *Superduperman*. He had a knack, when satirizing other artists' work, of extracting just enough detail for the viewer to identify the original while keeping to his own wacky, polished style.

Wood has a reputation for being obsessed with work. By nature shy and retiring, he reveals the best of himself, his sensitivity, brilliant imagination and sense of humour, through his creations. He is a very fast worker who can churn out fine drawings hour after hour with apparent ease, and he has produced a prodigious quantity of good material over the years. After he left EC he branched out into many different areas of commercial art including book covers and magazine illustration, advertising and television animation. At the same time he assisted on such syndicated newspaper strips as *Terry and the Pirates*, *Flash Gordon*, *Prince Valiant* and, with Jack Kirby, the highly regarded *Skymasters*. In 1964 his work on Marvel's *Daredevil* book earned him much acclaim, but the following year he excelled himself, achieving one of the highpoints of his career with the creation of the *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* for Tower Comics. The mid-sixties

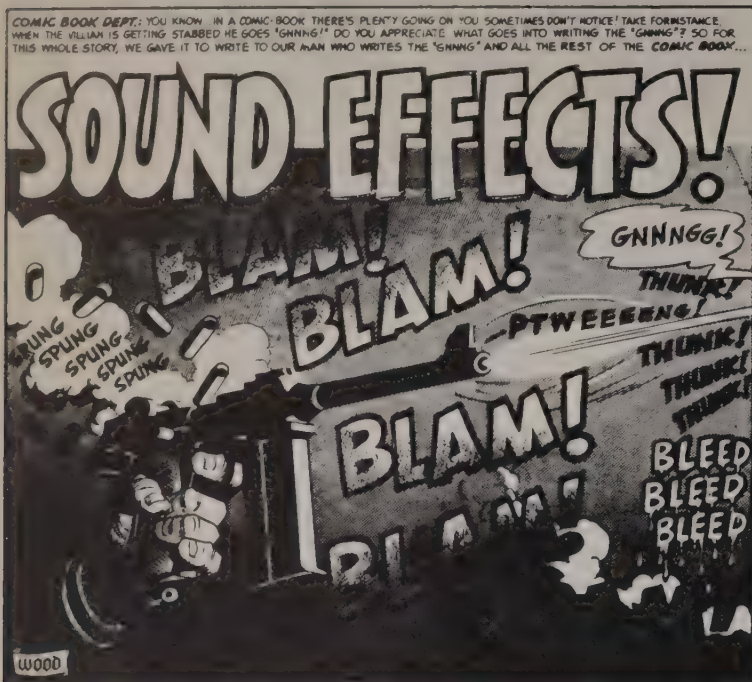
saw a comics revival in America. With the unveiling of Roy Lichtenstein's comic art painting, 'Wham!', showing rockets exploding around a jet plane, the comic book was suddenly fashionable. Marvel placed an insignia on the covers of their superhero comics which bore the words 'Pop Art', and critics like Maurice Horn began organizing gallery exhibitions in Paris and New York for this 'lost art form'. T.H.U.N.D.E.R. were the initials of a secret government organization set up to combat evil dictators trying to take over the world, and its superagents were loosely modelled on the James Bond films which were having a raging success in the cinemas during this period. The series, headed by Wood, was notable for the uniformly high quality of its artwork.

In 1966, Wood founded *Witzend*, a private publication in which professionals could write and draw stories that would not be released through the normal channels for want of mass-market appeal. His own contribution was *The Pipsqueak Papers*, from which the story reproduced on page 100 was taken. These ironic fantasies with explicitly sexual overtones, set in a charming fairytale world, revealed a side of Wood's character that had never appeared before. For his old colleagues at EC who knew Wood as a serious-minded introvert, it was a surprise, and there were more revelations to come. In 1975 he contributed the cover and lead story to a New York underground comic book called *Big Apple Comix*. The story, entitled *My Word*, was a lampoon on a much earlier piece called *My World* in which the artist looked at all the science fiction characters he had created at EC. *My Word* is Wood's unsparing view of New York City, with all its seediness, violence and sexual perversions. The drawings and text are entirely uninhibited and reveal him at his most outrageous. Here is Wood, with his usual graphic skills, his superb composition, careful delineations and marvellous use of tone, drawing all the taboo subjects of the underground comics. One of his best works, *My Word* provided a delightful, savage commentary on American mores with uncompromising candour and wit. In this later, more personal work, Wood expresses the pure joy of a man who truly loves the comic book medium. He is a remarkable figure who encompasses the entire tradition of American comics and illustrates by his own example the course of its development over three decades.

Underground comix, spelled with an 'x' to distinguish them from the straight commercial product, were born on the West Coast of America in the late sixties as an outgrowth of the underground newspapers and the psychedelic sub-culture of San Francisco, and they reflected both these influences. On the one hand, they were the mouthpiece of a generation in revolt against its elders, and the artists, who were mostly of college age, used the comix to vent their frustration and rage at the prevailing order of their society. They were often deliberately obscene and depicted any subject that was taboo and therefore likely to give offence. On the other hand, they were drawn for fun rather than profit, and there was a great feeling of playfulness (CONTINUED ON PAGE 102)

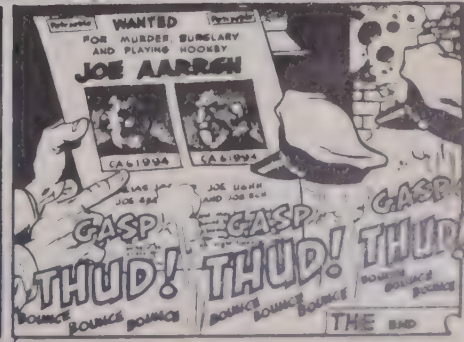
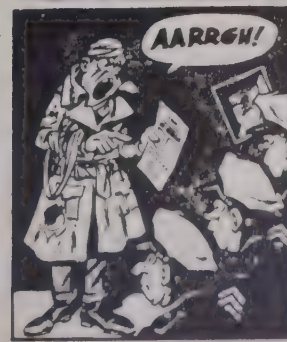
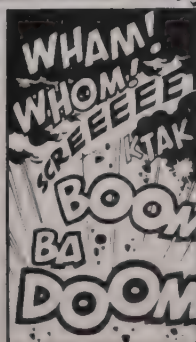
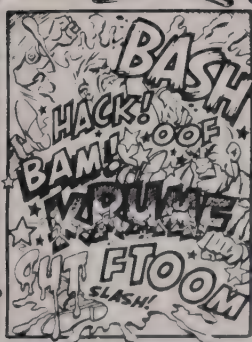
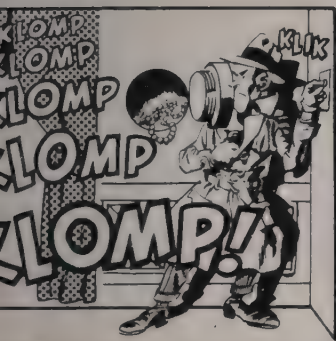
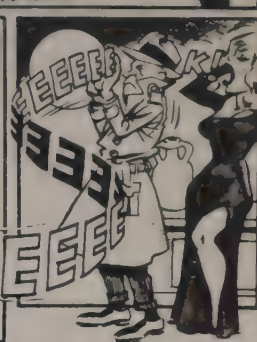
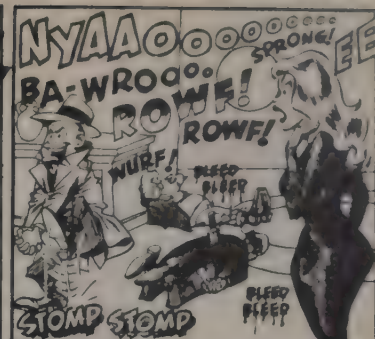
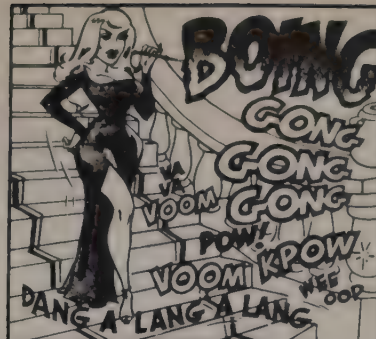
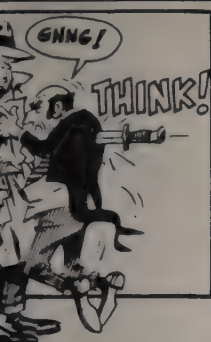
WALLACE WOOD

American cartoonist and illustrator. Born: Menahga, Minnesota, 1927. Principal works: 1951-7 comic book features for *Mad*, *Weird Fantasy*, *Weird Science*; 1958 newspaper strip *Skymasters*; 1965 *Thunder Agents*; 1966 *Pipsqueak Papers* for *Witzend*; 1975 *My Word* for underground comic *Big Apple*.



SATIRE ON THE GENRE OF THE HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE PERPETUATED BY MICKEY SPILLANE BOOKS AND SUCH FILMS AS *KISS ME DEADLY* AND *I THE JURY*. THE OVERALL TONE IS ONE OF MELODRAMA AND EXAGGERATION: TRENCHCOATS AND WIDE-BRIMMED HATS, IMPOSSIBLY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, AND ANY QUANTITY OF GUNS AND GORE. THE CLICHES ARE ALL IN THIS STORY, INCLUDING THE BEAUTIFUL SECRETARY. AS KURTZMAN WAS EDITING *MAD* AT THIS TIME HE WAS PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STORY. THERE ARE SOME AMUSING GRAPHIC TOUCHES, TOO, LIKE THE SOUND-EFFECTS WINDING BETWEEN THE PANELS. FROM *MAD* 20 (1955)







A YEAR LATER, OCTAVIAN WENT TO EGYPT AND WORKED OUT A PLOT WITH CLEOPATRA WHICH RESULTED IN ANTHONY'S COMMITTING SUICIDE, IN THE MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT SHE HAD ALREADY DONE SO. SHE THEN TRIED TO MAKE OCTAVIAN INFATUATED WITH HER, TO NO AVAIL. LEARNING LATER THAT HE PLANNED TO MAKE HER A CAPTIVE AND TAKE HER TO ROME, SHE CHOSE THE FATAL BITE OF THE ASP. EGYPT THEREAFTER BECAME A ROMAN PROVINCE.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA (ABOVE) AND JOAN OF ARC (OPPOSITE), TWO EXAMPLES OF WOOD'S HISTORICAL WORK. THESE WERE EXECUTED WITH THE STYLE AND POLISH WHICH WOOD BROUGHT TO HIS WORK ON KURTZMANN'S WAR COMICS AT EC. THE FIGURES THEMSELVES ARE ROMANTICIZED AND SEEM VERY MODERN IN THEIR GOOD LOOKS, BUT THE PICTURES HAVE A STRONG MOOD AND SOME RESEARCH HAS EVIDENTLY BEEN DONE TO GIVE A FEELING OF PERIOD IN EACH CASE. THERE IS A POETIC TOUCH IN THE JOAN OF ARC, THE RAIN FORESHADOWING THE SAINT'S DEATH. FROM A SET OF PRINTS PUBLISHED BY ALAN G. BARBOUR (1966)

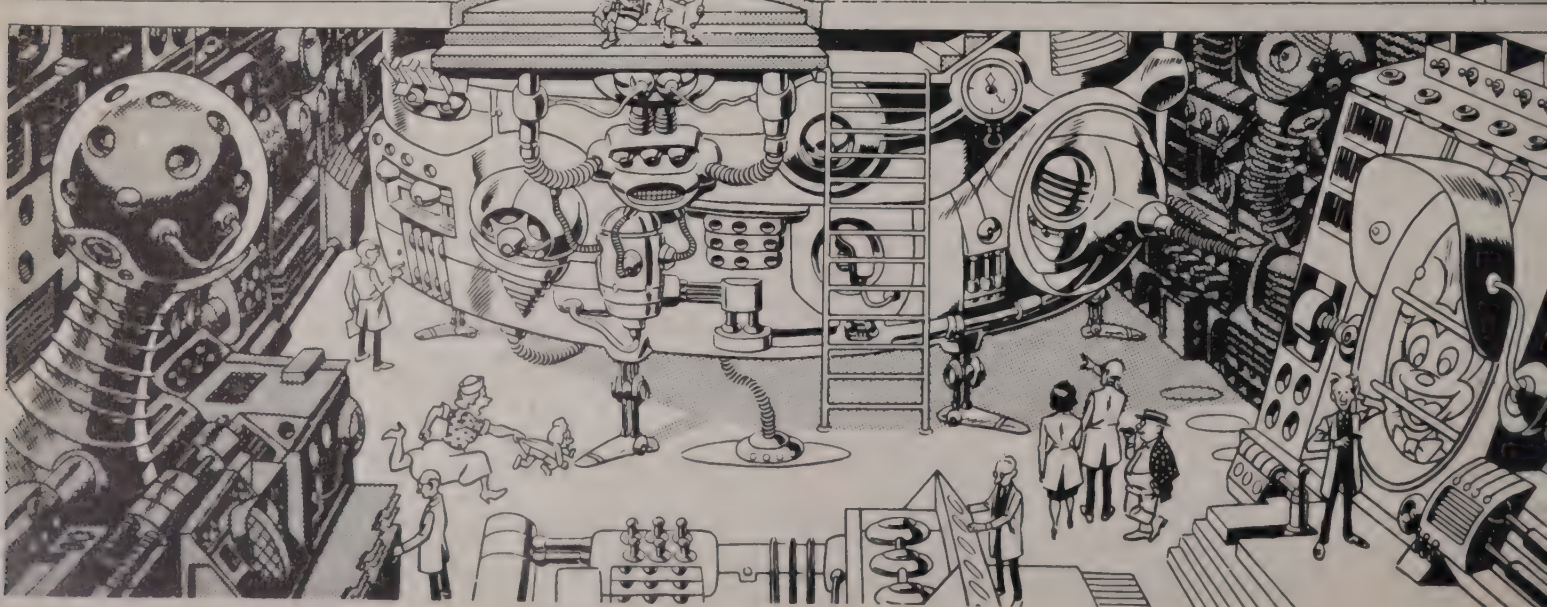




DYNAMO GAINED HIS SUPER POWERS WITH A FLICK OF A DIAL ON HIS THUNDER BELT. IN THE SERIES OF COMICS CALLED THUNDER AGENTS WOOD MARRIED THE SUPERHERO FORMULA OF THE COMIC BOOK TO THE CRAZE FOR JAMES BOND HEROES. THUS OFFICE BOY LEN BROWN ALIAS DYNAMO USED FUTURISTIC TECHNOLOGY TO RECOVER STOLEN ATOMIC SECRETS. FROM: DYNAMO 3 (1967)



CHENNAULT'S RAIDERS WERE A BRANCH OF THE USAF IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THE WORK PATTERN ESTABLISHED UNDER KURTZMAN AT EC, WITH HIS INSISTENCE ON RESEARCH, PRODUCED VERY REALISTIC COMIC ART IN WOOD'S HANDS. FROM A SET OF PRINTS PUBLISHED BY ALAN G. BARBOUR





ABOVE: IN THE POSTER *ADAM AND EVE* (1977) THE SPACE-SUITED ADAM CONFRONTS AN ALIEN EVE UNDER THE TWIN MOONS OF ANOTHER EDEN.

OPPOSITE: ANOTHER POSTER, PRODUCED BY A SCANDINAVIAN FIRM, REPRINTED IN A *WALLY WOOD PORTFOLIO* (C. 1969). THE STRENGTH OF WOOD'S IMAGINATION IN CREATING FUTURISTIC TECHNOLOGY AND ALIEN WORLDS IS REINFORCED BY THE CLARITY OF HIS DRAWING STYLE.

THERE HAD NEVER BEEN SUCH A MORNING... THE FIRST SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT OPENED THE BLOSSOMS OF THE GIANT BUTTERBUSH... NUDINE EMERGED FULL OF WIDE-EYED WONDER AND GREETED THE NEW DAY...

PIPSQUEAK PAPERS

HELLO, WORLD!

Copyright © Wallace Wood 1981

COMING UPON A HUMANOID FIGURE, SHE ASKED HER ETERNAL QUESTION...

ARE YOU A MAN?

SHE RECEIVED NO REPLY, AND THEREFORE FELL IN LOVE AT ONCE... BUT DETERMINED TO RESUME HER QUEST, WHEN...

I'M A MAN AND I LOVE YOU

IT WAS PIP, WHO PERIODICALLY APPEARED TO PROFESS HIS UNDYING DEVOTION...

I LOVE YOU TOO, PIP... BUT YOU'RE JUST A BABY MAN!

...AND THERE ARE CERTAIN PROBLEMS...

LIKE WHAT

LIKE HOW WOULD WE EVER CONSUMMATE THE THING?

OH!

CRESTFALLEN BUT RESOLUTE, THE TINY SUITOR PLEADED HIS CASE WITH HIS USUAL ARDOR...

...YOU HAVE WON MY HEART AND IT IS YOURS!

OH, GOODY! IN THAT CASE, SEND IT TO ME...

SOMEWHAT SUBDUED, BUT DECLARING THE ETERNAL NATURE OF HIS DEATHLESS LOVE, PIP WENT HIS WAY... AND WHEN NUDINE RETURNED TO HER BOWER, SHE FOUND A PRESENT WAITING...

OPENING THE PACKAGE EAGERLY, SHE EXTRACTED ITS CONTENTS WITH A GLAD LITTLE CRY...

OH! A HEART! OH! FOR ME!

...AND TOOK IT, AND LOVINGLY PREPARED IT AND COOKED IT...

...AND ATE IT.



ABOVE: A PANEL FROM *MY WORD*, WHICH IS BOTH A SATIRE ON NEW YORK LIFE AND A LAMPOON OF WOOD'S SCIENCE FICTION WORK FOR EC. IT REFERS DIRECTLY TO HIS EC STORY *MY WORLD* IN WHICH WOOD DISCUSSED THE SCIENCE FICTION WORLDS HE HAD CREATED FROM HIS IMAGINATION. FROM: *BIG APPLE COMIX* (1975)

OPPOSITE: ANOTHER SIDE OF WOOD, FULL OF FANTASY AND QUIET HUMOUR. THE DRAWING IS MORE CARTOON-LIKE AND LESS REALISTIC THAN HIS USUAL COMIC BOOK STYLE. CURIOUS ANIMALS AND GNOMES POPULATE THIS FAIRYTALE WORLD FOR ADULTS. FROM: *WITZEND 3* (1967)

what was done. Whether they were expressing intimate sexual fantasies or cosmic visions their authors rarely took themselves too seriously. In one sense they were the direct descendants of Kurtzman and Wood, for they had grown up with EC comics and were influenced by their narrative technique as well as their wacky humour. They also remembered well the days before censorship had reduced the comic book to bland pap, and they saw themselves as the new liberators of the medium.

Two important factors contributed to the success of the underground comix: the new advances in offset printing and the rise of the psychedelic poster industry. The first provided the means of production and the second opened the channels of distribution. The new lithographic machines were small enough to be handled by one person, which made it economically possible to print small runs. This meant that anyone with a little capital could start his own printing press and small groups of like-minded people could give voice to their ideas without the backing of wealthy sponsors. Underground newspapers began springing up all over America, particularly around the college centres. To most young people they stood for what was new, daring and exciting, and reflected the kind of experimentation taking place in their own lives. The *Berkeley Barb*, the *L.A. Free Press*, the *Gothic Blimp Works*, the *East Village Other* and *Yarrowstalks* all carried comic strips and attracted contributions from a growing number of talented people. Many of these artists gathered in the San Francisco Bay Area which was fast becoming the Mecca of rock music. They earned their living drawing posters for rock-concert halls like the Avalon and Fillmore auditoriums. The posters advertised the bands and helped to create the psychedelic image of the music, but they were serious artistic endeavours and were soon sought after for their own sake. The outlets formed for the poster business embraced all the other subjects of hippie culture including incense, beads, pipes and eventually comix as well. By the time Robert Crumb came out with *Zap 1*, distributing it himself around the Bay Area, the channels already existed to absorb it. Crumb's example inspired other artists to set up printing studios and bring out their own comix, and within a few months a whole new industry had come to life.

Robert Crumb not only began the modern movement in American comics, he is one of its most brilliant and controversial figures. His unbridled sexual fantasies have upset nearly everyone from civil court judges to women liberationists, but his creations have also endeared him to a whole generation which has taken them as symbols of its life. He has created a host of unforgettable characters including Mr. Natural, Fritz the Cat, Schuman the Human, Honeybush Kaminski, Bob Bolinski and Flakey Foont. His *Zap* comics, extending over nine issues, have been reprinted innumerable times and translated into several languages. *Fritz the Cat* was made into a successful animation film, and Crumb's work – or as much of it as could be respectably shown – has been

collected into anthologies by leading American publishers. Despite much acclaim, Crumb makes no apparent effort to be 'artistic'. His drawings are very simple pen-and-ink cartoons done with a mapping quill or rapidograph. Like Kurtzman, he is more interested in narrative ideas than in experimenting with graphic design. He is a compulsive draughtsman who takes obvious pleasure in expressing his fantasy life.

Crumb was born in Philadelphia in 1943. His brother and sister and he were all avid cartoonists as children, filling entire school notebooks with comic stories. Each had a favourite character which they used time after time and incorporated into their joint strips. Mostly they were funny animals, and it was here that Crumb first developed Fritz the Cat, who can be seen in one of his later more devilish incarnations in the story reproduced on page 110. Entirely self-taught, Crumb learned to express himself graphically when he was very young and had a sure hand by the time he was drawing his dirty cartoons for the burgeoning underground newspaper market. Despite his brief involvement with Kurtzman on *Help!* Crumb never really left the underground, preferring his freedom to the lures of financial success. It is even said that he once infuriated the editor of *Playboy* by refusing an offer of two thousand dollars a week to draw a cartoon strip for them.

The main body of his work falls into two categories. The first is explicitly sexual and involves endless depictions of lovemaking in all its manifold permutations. Many of the stories are pseudo-autobiographical and portray him as having an insatiable sexual appetite. Some splendid personalities have emerged from these stories, such as Whiteman, a typical middle-class American with sexual inhibitions, and the Yetti, a hair-covered Amazon who captures him and makes him her lover. The other African Amazon is Angelford McSpade, a wonderfully grotesque version of the Annie Fanny type innocent. The second type of story is more philosophical and comes to grips with issues of the day such as police brutality, drug-taking, spiritual quests and the general life of the counter-culture in the sixties. One of his most beloved characters in this genre is Mr. Natural, the bald-headed, slightly spurious guro who is pictured in meditation on page 112. He became the hero of the younger generation, symbolizing its attitudes, aspirations and follies, and he provided the mirror in which it could see itself.

In the last analysis, Crumb transcends his position as the archetypal underground comix artist of the sixties. His work breaks new ground and goes beyond the crude joke or stereotyped fantasy. Beneath the outrageous surface is an incisive portrait of contemporary American culture. He draws his world and characters with great skill, keeping a delicate balance between humour and pathos, and, because his people are lovingly conceived and true to life, they have a universal appeal. He is a worthy successor to Kurtzman, Wood and the other fine satirists of the older generation, and his work has a sincerity and thoughtfulness that merits repeated viewing.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 114)

ROBERT CRUMB

American cartoonist, writer and underground comix artist. Born: Philadelphia, 1943. Principal works: 1967-72 comix features in *Zap 0-8*, *Mr. Natural 1, 2*, *Big Ass 1, 2*, *Home Grown Funnies*, *Peoples' Comix*, *Black and White Comix*, *Jizz*, *Snatch*; 1968-9 books *R. Crumb's Head Comix*, *Fritz the Cat*; 1975 features in *Arcade*



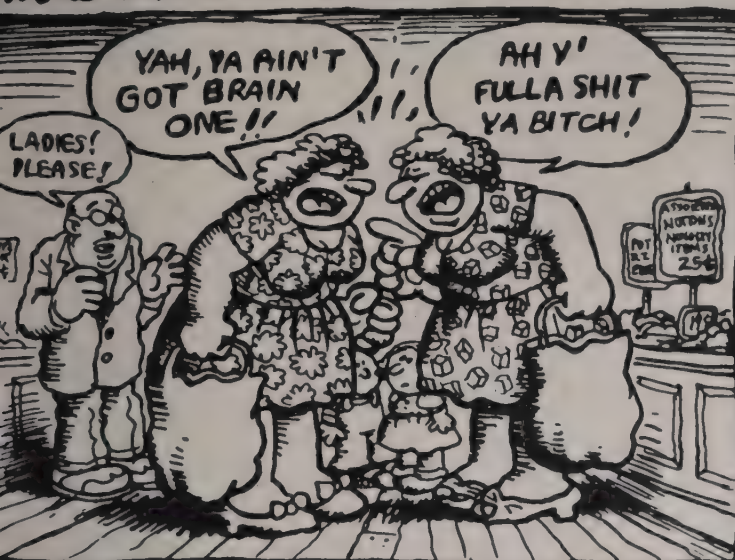
MOST OF CRUMB'S EARLY STORIES WERE UNABASHED SEXUAL FANTASIES. THESE UPSET MANY WOMEN'S LIBERATIONISTS WHO SAW CRUMB'S WOMEN AS SEX OBJECTS. THE PANEL ABOVE SHOWS HE IS STILL WRITINGLY ATTACKING THE SAME THEMES NEARLY A DECADE LATER. FROM: *ARCADE* (1975)

PAGES 105-8: *MEATBALL* WAS INSPIRED BY AN EARLY MAD STORY, *NIGHT PEOPLE VERSUS MEATBALLISM*. WHILE 'MEATBALLISM' ORIGINALLY MEANT MINDLESSNESS, CRUMB TRANSFORMED THE MEATBALL INTO A MEANS OF MENTAL AWAKENING. FROM: *ZAP 0* (1967)

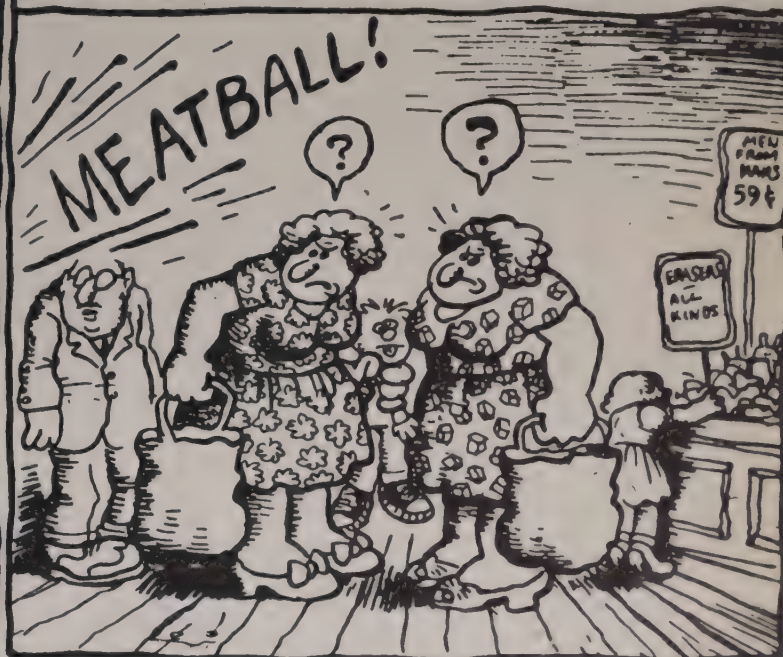
NO ONE CAN EXPLAIN IT. NO ONE KNOWS WHO'S BEHIND IT OR WHAT THE PURPOSE IS. ALL WE CAN DO IS BE GRATEFUL FOR....

MEATBALL

THE FIRST KNOWN INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN A DIME STORE IN JERSEY CITY BACK IN 1959. A MRS. YAHOOTIE AND A MRS. KNISH WERE HAVING A TERRIBLE FIGHT.



...WHEN SUDDENLY A VOICE CRIED OUT!



MRS. YAHOOTIE GOT HIT!



MEATBALL CHANGED HER LIFE. HER NAME IS NOW A HOUSEHOLD WORD. SHE HAS MADE DOZENS OF APPEARANCES ON TV AND RADIO AND HAS BECOME AMERICA'S FAVORITE MOTHER!



THEN THERE WAS THE BEATNIK WHO WAS ALWAYS HIGH...

TOO MUCH BABY! LIKE, WOW!

LIKE STONED!

CRAZY MAN CRAZY!

LIKE YEAH!

LIKE COOL!

SNAP SNAP

HEY

TOO MUCH BABY!
LIKE, WOW!
LIKE STONED!

CRAZY MAN
CRAZY!

LIKE
YEAH!

LIKE
COOL!

SNAP
SNAP

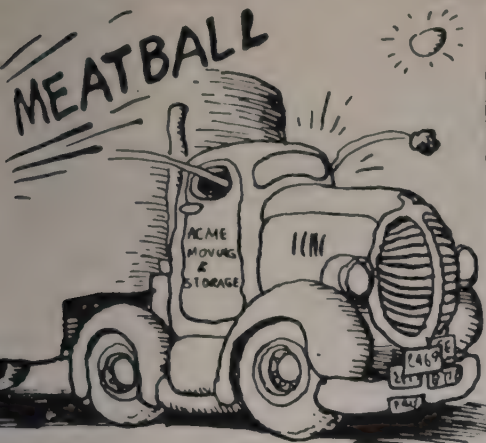
HEY

LIKE, MEATBALL!

GOINK!

A cartoon illustration of a man with wild, spiky hair and a beard, smiling broadly. He is holding a pair of sunglasses in his right hand and gesturing with his left hand. A speech bubble above him says "ALL RIGHT!". The background features a sun in the top right corner and a city skyline with various buildings. In the foreground, there are several other characters, including a man in a suit and a woman with curly hair, looking up at the central figure. The style is a simple line drawing with a thick black border.

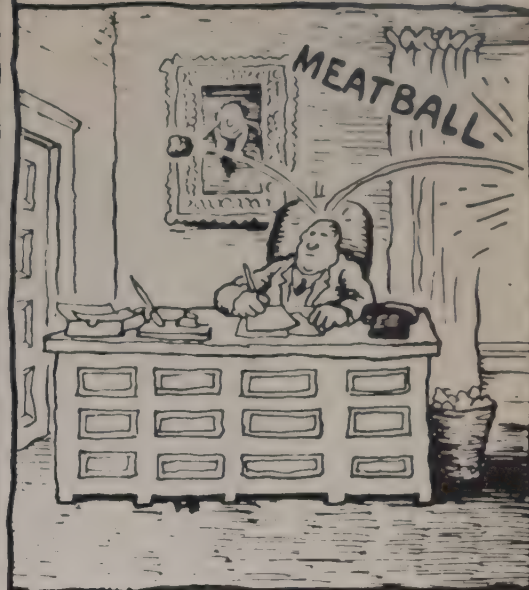
AROUND THREE YEARS AGO, MEATBALLS BEGAN STRIKING MORE FREQUENTLY.



PEOPLE IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE WERE GETTING HIT



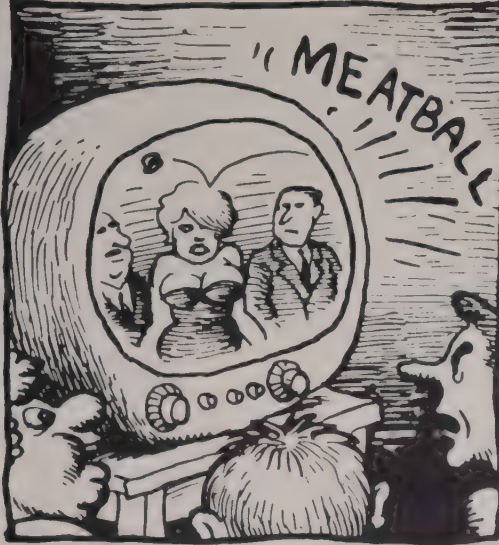
RESPECTED MEN IN HIGH PLACES WERE GETTING HIT.



BERTRAND RUSSELL GOT HIT.



KIM NOVAK GOT HIT ON TV IN FRONT OF MILLIONS OF VIEWERS...



ARTICLES BEGAN TO APPEAR IN MAGAZINES. NOTED EXPERTS STATED THEIR VIEWS.



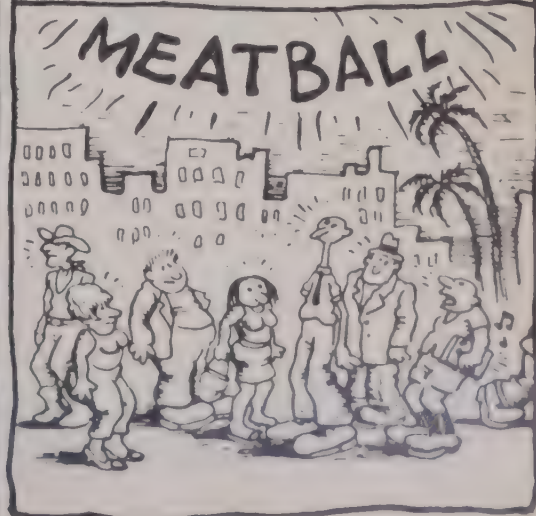
SPEECHES WERE MADE BY MEN OF GOVERNMENT... COMMITTEES FORMED... INVESTIGATIONS STARTED...



THE POLICE PICKED UP SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS BELIEVED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE MEATBALL "PLOT."



THEN ONE SMOGGY TUESDAY IN LOS ANGELES, AROUND 12 NOON, EVERYONE IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA HEARD THE CRY... WHAT FOLLOWED IS HISTORY.



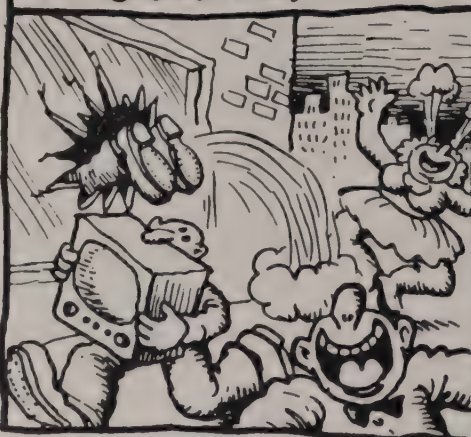
IT RAINED MEATBALLS IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES FOR ALMOST 15 MINUTES!



THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ALL WERE HIT AT THE SAME TIME



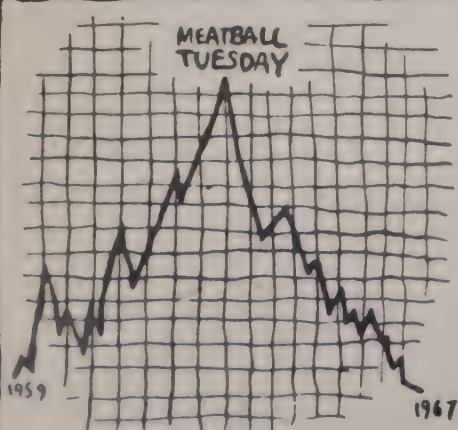
THERE WAS RIOTING AND LOOTING AND DANCING IN THE STREETS AND A LOT OF GIGGLING!



COPS BUSTED HEADS BUT THEY COULDN'T STOP WHAT HAD HAPPENED.



SINCE "MEATBALL TUESDAY" IT APPEARS THAT THE NUMBER OF INSTANCES HAS STARTED TO TAPER OFF...



FOR MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVEN'T YET ENCOUNTERED THE MEATBALL, THE DECLINE IS A CONSTANT SOURCE OF ANXIETY AS THEY WAIT AND HOPE THAT SOME FINE DAY THEY TOO.....BUT ALAS...



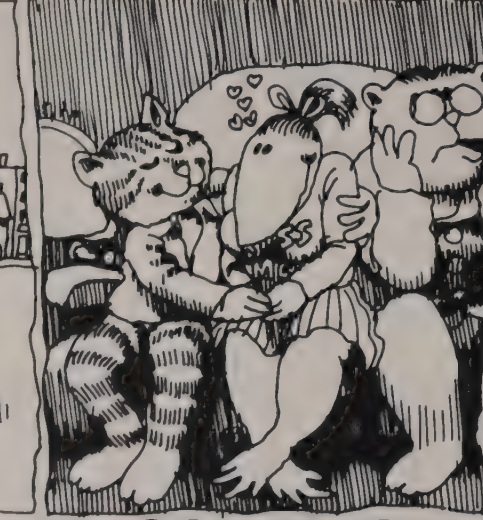
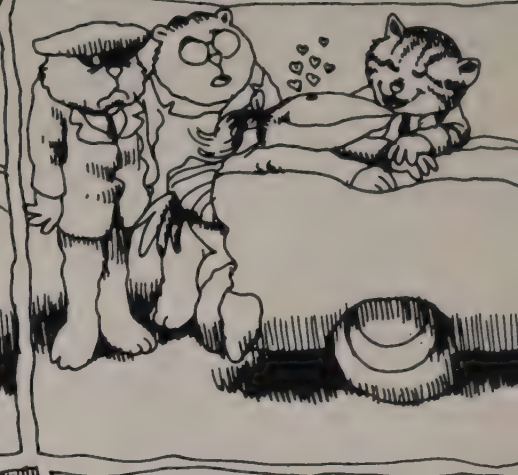
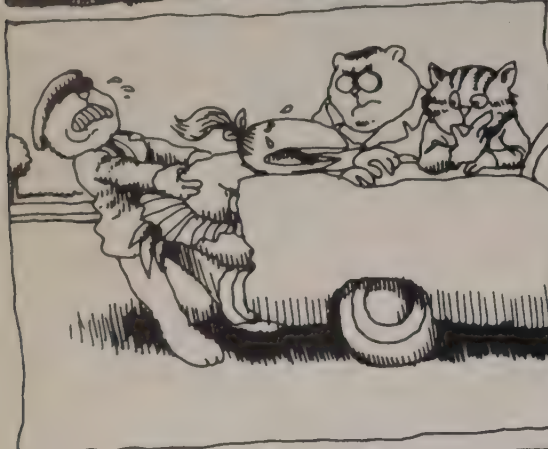
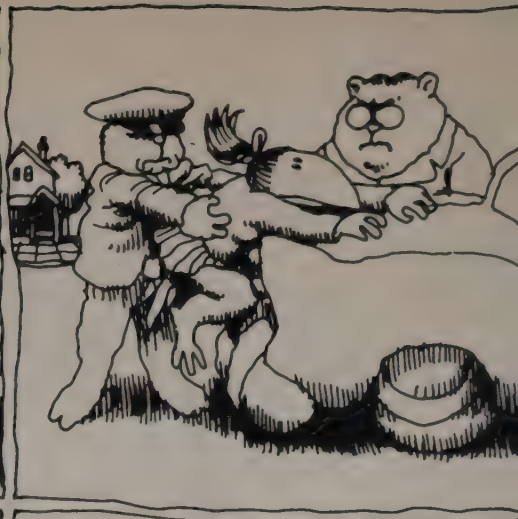
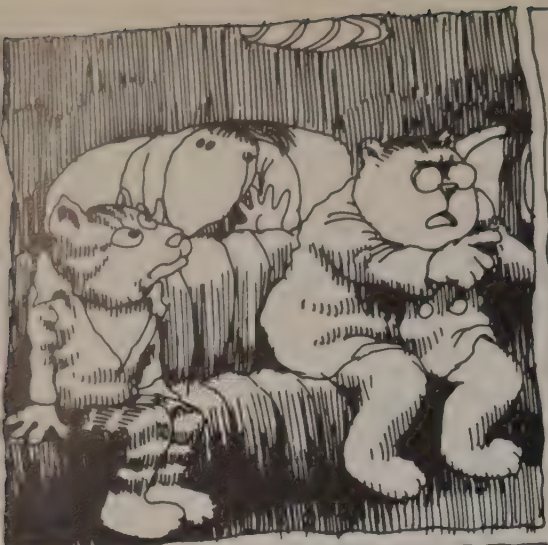
MEATBALL DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY!

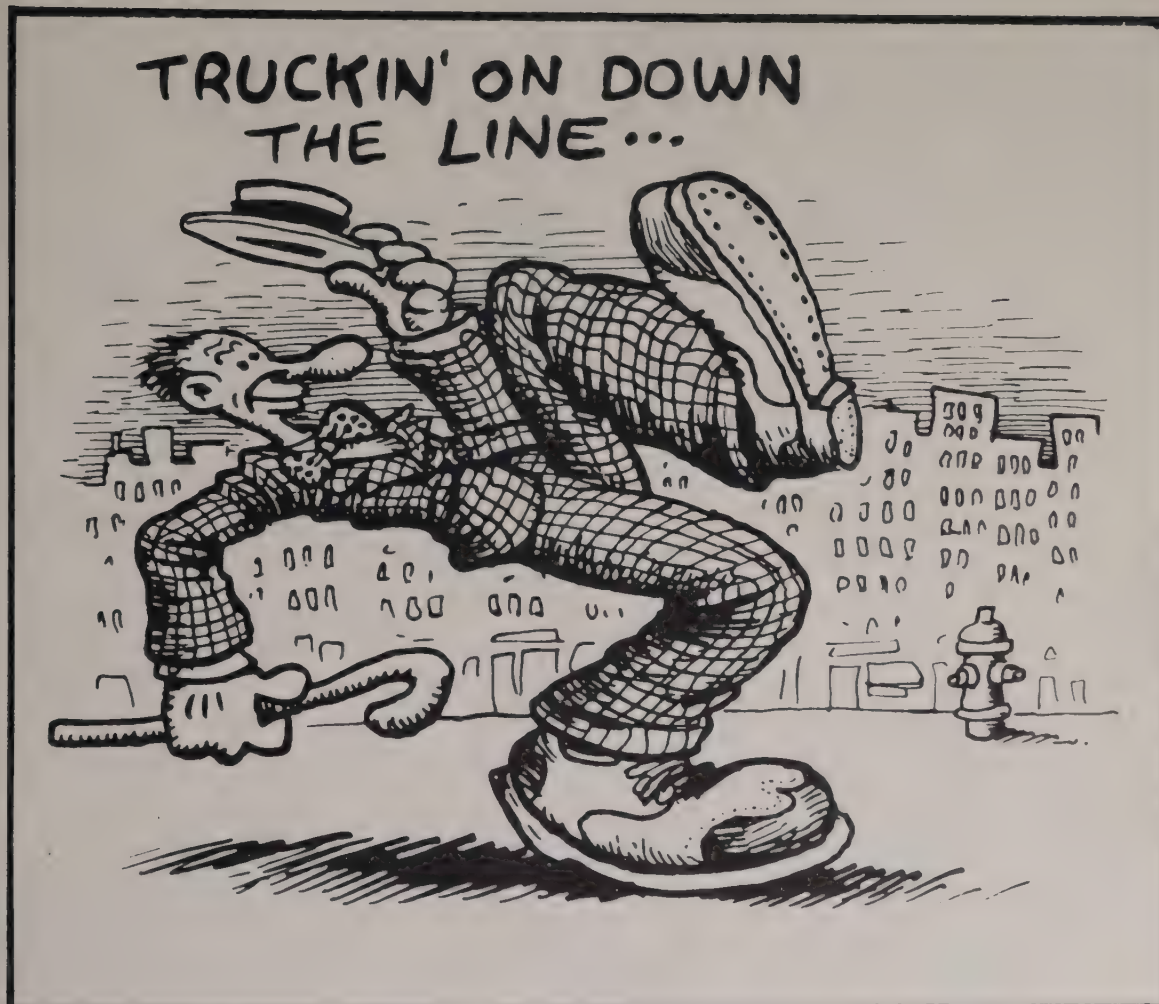


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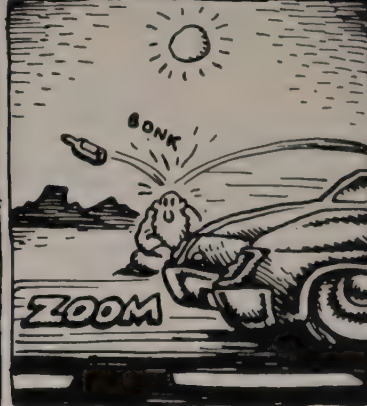
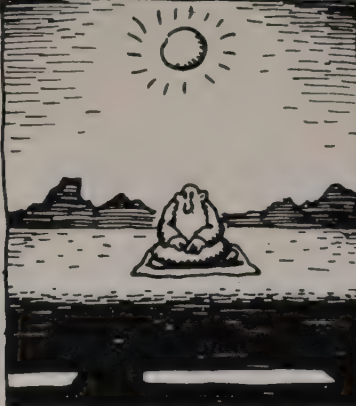
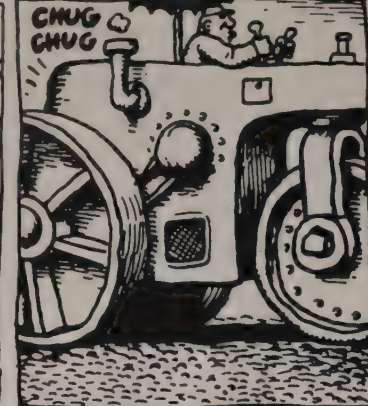
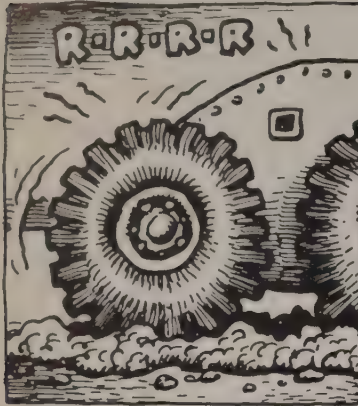
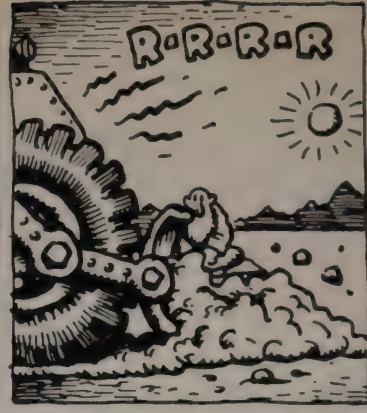
STONED AGIN'. MANY OF THE STORIES IN UNDERGROUND COMIX WERE INFLUENCED BY THE CHANGING LIFESTYLE OF THE YOUNG IN THE LATE 60s, AND THEIR INTEREST IN SEX, MUSIC, DRUGS AND POLITICS. CRUMB'S PORTRAYAL OF A DRUG USER DEPICTS A SENSE OF COMPLETE EUPHORIA - HIS 'TRIP' HAS RELAXED HIM SO MUCH THAT HIS HEAD JUST MELTS THROUGH HIS HANDS. FROM: *HYTONE COMIX* (1971)





ABOVE: 'KEEP ON TRUCKIN' BECAME A CATCH PHRASE AFTER THE APPEARANCE OF THIS DRAWING. AND LARGE COMPANIES EXPLOITED IT WITHOUT CRUMB'S PERMISSION. WITH SOME HUMOUR CRUMB LATER CREATED A WHOLE PAGE OF PHRASES SUCH AS 'KEEP ON TOOTLIN' AND 'KEEP ON SCHMUCKIN', EACH WITH ITS OWN SMALL COPYRIGHT SYMBOL. FROM *ZAP!* (1967)

OPPOSITE: ONE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCES OF *FRITZ THE CAT*, WHICH WAS TO BECOME PERHAPS THE BEST KNOWN OF THE UNDERGROUND COMIX FEATURES. FROM *HELP!* (1965)





ABOVE: THE ARTIST OFTEN DEPICTS HIMSELF COMMENTING IRONICALLY ON HIS OWN WORK. IN THE LAND OF THE FREE, WHAT THE 'MAJORITY' DECIDES BECOMES LAW. THE 'MINORITY' OF UNDERGROUND COMIX ARTISTS THUS FOUND THEMSELVES IN TROUBLE AFTER THE SUPREME COURT DECISION OF JUNE 1973 WHICH LEFT THE DEFINITION OF OBSCENITY TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES. FROM: *PEOPLES' COMIX* (1972)

OPPOSITE: CRUMB'S FAMOUS CREATION, MR. NATURAL, A HUMOROUS GURU-TYPE WHO BECAME A CULT FIGURE IN THE UNDERGROUND SCENE OF THE LATE 1960s. HE FIRST APPEARED IN *YARROWSTALKS* IN 1967 AND WAS THE IMPETUS BEHIND THE CREATION OF *ZAP*. FROM: *ZAP 4* (1970)

Victor Moscoso is another prominent figure in the comix underground, but one who has regarded the medium more as a field of experimental graphics than as his career. He was born in Spain in 1936 and educated at the Cooper Union Art School in New York City. In 1968, when Crumb first published *Zap* 1, he was teaching lithography and print making at the San Francisco Art Institute and drawing dance posters for the Fillmore and Avalon auditoriums. He and another artist, Rick Griffin, had done some comic strip posters as well and were preparing a book of their comic drawings that they planned to print in full colour on coated art paper. Crumb had seen their posters and asked them to work with him on *Zap* 2. They agreed. Crumb's comic book had made them enthusiastic about the format and they thought it would be just as effective to use newsprint, even if the pictures were in black and white. A lot of Moscoso's work for this proposed book was printed in the early issues of *Zap*. Other drawings appeared in the underground newspaper *Yellow Dog*. He did persist with his idea of a book in colour, however, and when it finally appeared in 1971 it was his crowning achievement in the field: the first full-colour underground comic appropriately entitled *Color*. Many of the panels in *Color*, such as the two shown on page 122, were incorporated into a long poster which he was commissioned to produce by a local radio station, and appeared as one continuous strip running the length of San Francisco buses.

Moscoso's comic books are an extension of his poster work. They are concerned more with the elements of visual language than with either plots, characters or social commentary. There are few concessions to traditional comic book narrative by way of speech balloons or text in his stories. He creates instead a totally visual world that cannot be appreciated at a single glance. It is an esoteric world of playful, enigmatic shapes and changing spatial relationships, suggesting an altered state of consciousness, where boundaries merge and objects take on double meanings as they metamorphose into one another. *Luna Toon* (on pages 124-125) is a typical example. The sun rising behind a pyramid is split by the desert haze into floating orbs which form into a Mickey Mouse figure who is in turn transformed into a cut-out space in a wall – and so on, with ears becoming stones that melt into water and rise again as breasts to become once more the ears of Mickey Mouse. This fluid play of form has a childlike quality that is reinforced by the presence of the Walt Disney characters.

Moscoso experiments with the notion of perspective: in the panel from *Hocus Pocus* on page 116 the ceiling is the floor and the floor the ceiling depending upon where you are in the story. *Hocus Pocus* is a clever strip which can be read through once, turned upside down and read through to the beginning again. In *Color*, Moscoso extends the 'upside-down' theme still further. The characters occupy the same time as well as space within the panel. There is thus no right or wrong way of looking at it, only one's point of view. The other theme in *Color* is that of worlds within worlds: a spaceship in the universe

is also a fish in an aquarium; the familiar sun can equally be an alien monster. Each case involves a shifting in one's own perspective and is no longer dependent on changing the position of the page. On the closing page of *Color* a huge mechanical bird appears to carry off the spacecraft and lead one back to the beginning of the story. The book then becomes a self-contained world within our own world.

Moscoso has explored a number of disciplines from lithography, posters and comix to commercial illustration and animated films for television. He moves freely among them, exploring the same themes in one as in the other. A case in point is his video film of several Zap artists at work on a poster. Harvey Kurtzman made an unexpected appearance and helped to draw some of the panels. The movie was shown publicly at the San Francisco Art Institute and the poster, called *Science Fiction Funnies*, was distributed through the underground channels. Here again, perhaps unwittingly, Moscoso expresses his vision of worlds merging, losing their boundaries and being incorporated within one another.

Moscoso's stories are filled with references to other comics and he pays tribute to many of the early comic strip masters in his work. *Hocus Pocus* is a clear tribute to the Dutch artist Gustav Verbeck who drew *The Upside Downs of Little Lady Lovekins and Old Man Muffaroo* for the *New York Herald* in 1903. In *Color* Moscoso creates a piece of furniture that gets up, grows its legs and walks away. Precisely the same sequence occurs in both Winsor McKay's *Little Nemo of Slumberland* and the Fleischer brothers' animation film *Betty Boop*. There is also the constant borrowing of Walt Disney characters for his own purposes. Moscoso obviously admires the traditional comic strip. In this way he is typical of many young comic book artists today who have studied the contributions of skilled artists in the past and have benefited by the increased awareness of the history of comics and the more readily available reprints of the best work.

The comic book as an outgrowth of the comic strip has created a new art form with its own techniques, conventions and aesthetic criteria, and it must be judged within its own context. It is neither literature for the narrative is not dependent on the written word alone, nor illustration for it takes a sequence of pictures and text to unfold the story. The picture tells the story and the text illustrates it, giving the comic book a peculiar dynamic of its own.

Comics can no longer be dismissed as entertainment solely for children, nor can they be seen as inconsequential artifacts of mass media. They have had a far-reaching impact on modern culture and have left their mark on motion pictures, television, illustration and graphic design, as well as on the more rarified realms of contemporary art and literature. As appreciation of the medium grows the quality of visual narrative is refined and the language of comic book art continues to be enriched.

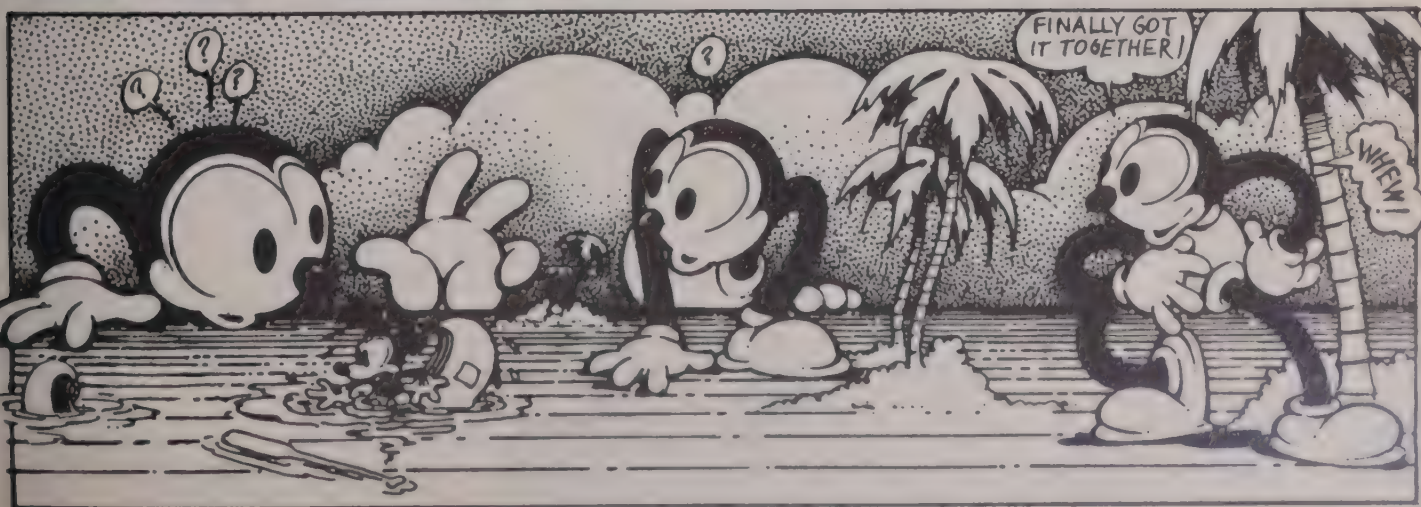
VICTOR MOSCOSO

American underground comix and graphic artist. Born: La Coruña, Spain, 1936. Pseudonym: Vincent. Principal works: 1968-75 comix features and drawings in *Zap* 2-6, *El Perfecto*, *Yellow Dog* 2 and 7, *Jiz*, *Snatch* 2 and 3, *Radical America* and *Color*.

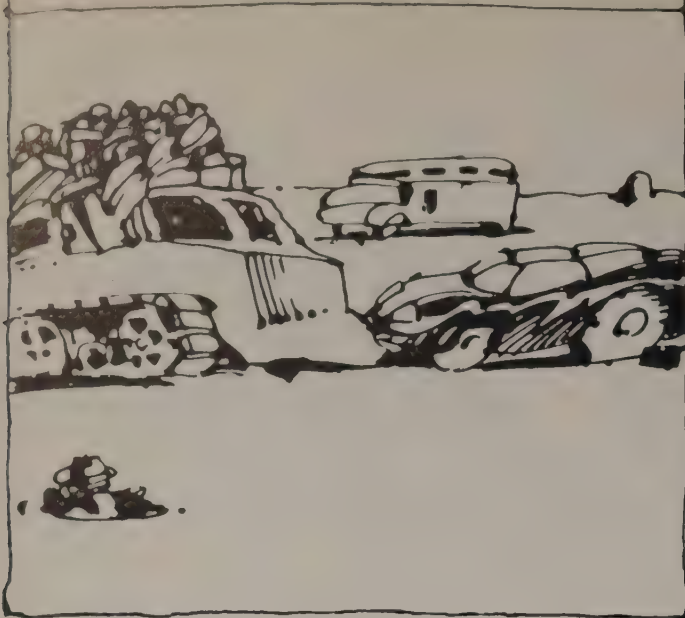


ABOVE: A PANEL FROM A MAGICAL STORY, *HOCUS POCUS*, WHICH COULD BE REVERSED AND READ UPSIDE DOWN. THE IDEA STEMS FROM THE WORK OF GUSTAV VERBECK WHO USED IT IN *THE UPSIDE DOWNS OF LITTLE LADY LOVEKINS* AND *OLD MAN MUFFAROO* FOR THE *NEW YORK HERALD* IN 1903. FROM: *ZAP* 4 (1970)

OPPOSITE: MOSCOSO USES FAMILIAR CARTOON CHARACTERS LIKE MICKEY MOUSE IN A MORE ABSTRACT, SYMBOLIC CONTEXT. NOTE HOW RECURRING SHAPES ARE USED TO FURTHER THE NARRATIVE. FROM: *LOOP DE LOOP*, *ZAP* 4 (1970)



OUTSIDE, THE SITUATION GREW TENSE



THE SLICK PRINCE WASTED NO TIME



OPPOSITE: THIS APPARENTLY CONVENTIONAL STRIP WITH SPEECH BALLOONS AND CONTINUING ACTION FROM PANEL TO PANEL IS IN FACT A NONSENSE STORY. MOSCOSO IS MORE CONCERNED WITH THE VISUAL LANGUAGE OF SURREAL IMAGERY AND CHANGING SCALE. FROM: ZAP 5 (1971)

OVERLEAF: THE FRONT AND BACK COVERS TO ZAP 4 (1970), SHOWING A SIMPLE YET DRAMATIC USE OF COLOUR. MOSCOSO ACHIEVES HIS EFFECT BY DEPLOYING THE FULL STRENGTH OF THE PRINTING INKS.



ABOVE: A CHARMING LITTLE NARRATIVE ENTITLED DINOSAUR FIGHT. THE BRILLIANT USE OF COLOUR REFLECTS HIS PRINT-MAKING BACKGROUND. FROM: ZAP 8 (1975)



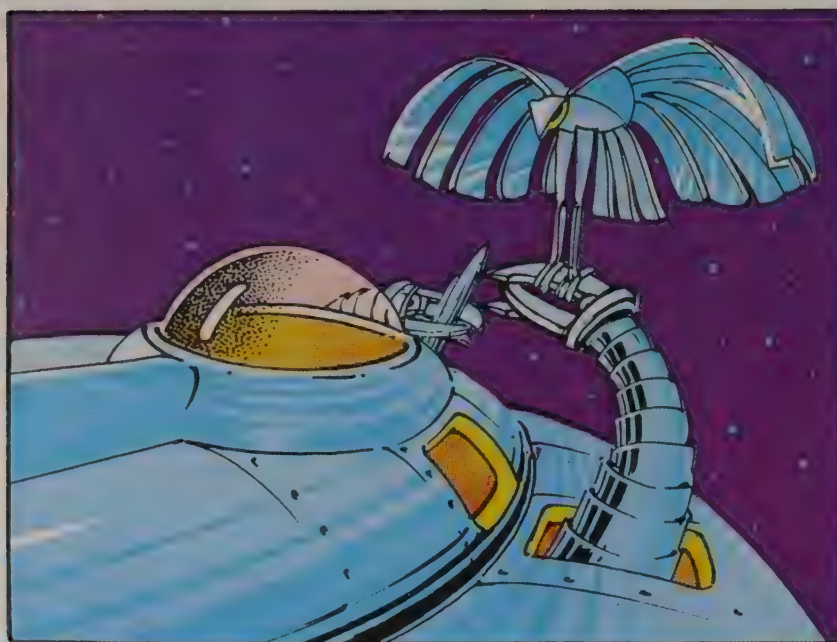
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ZAP COMIX

NO. 4
ADULTS
ONLY!

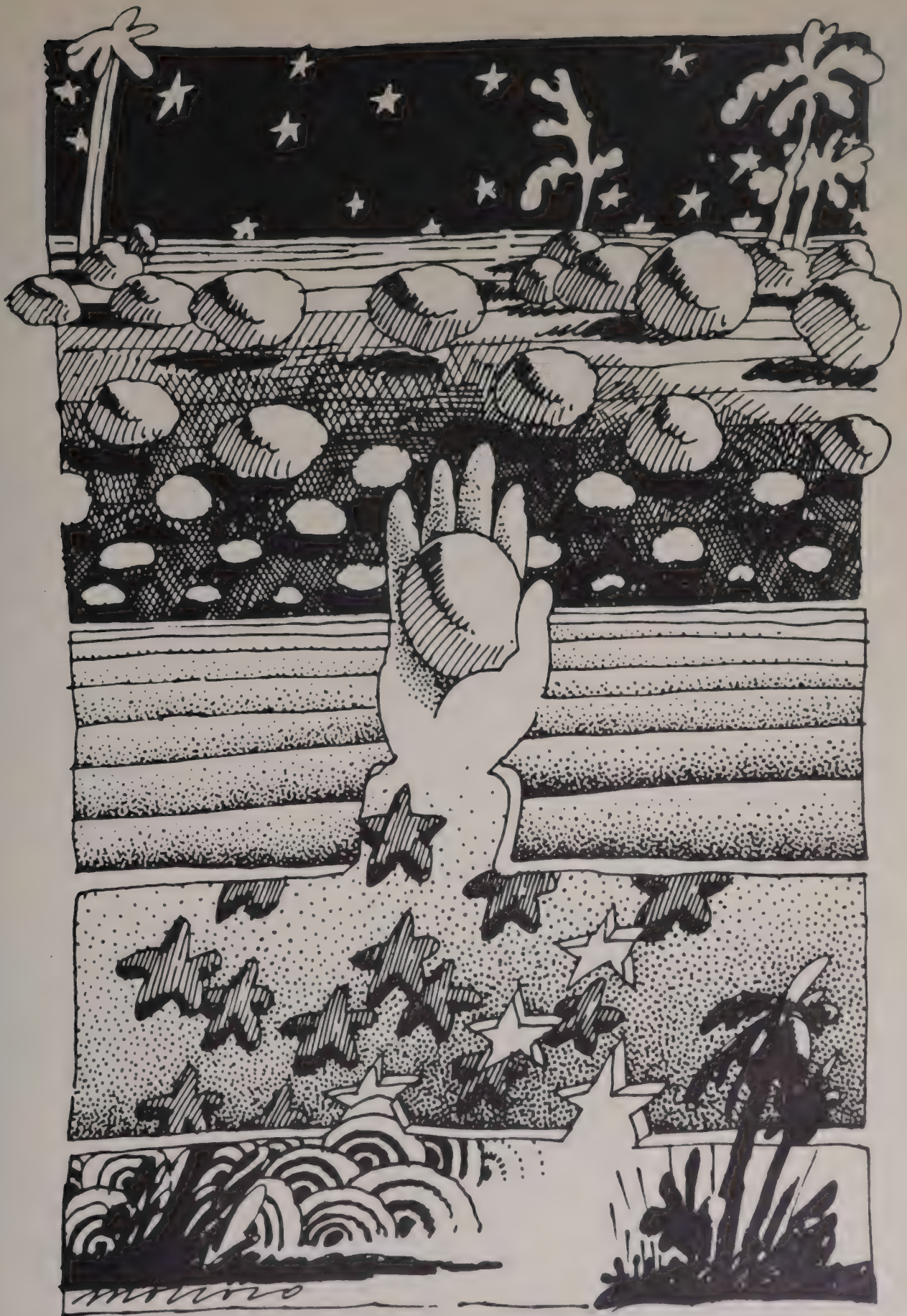


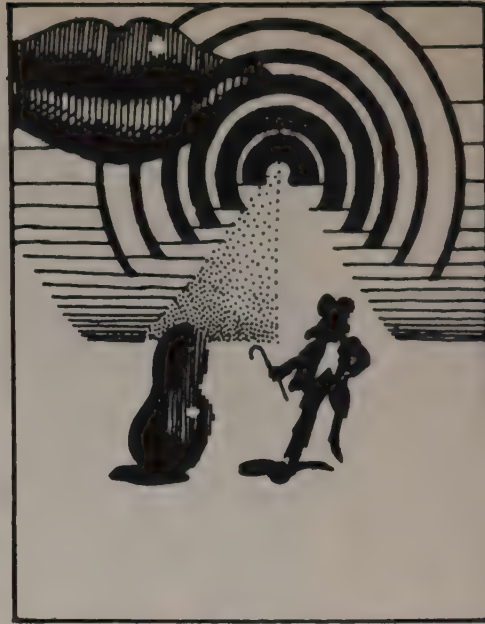
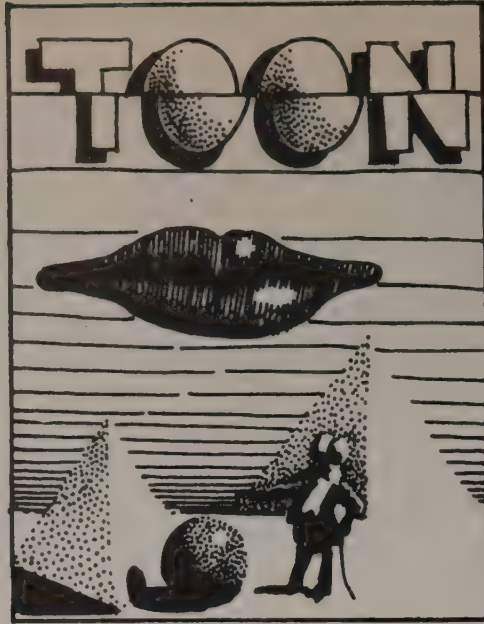
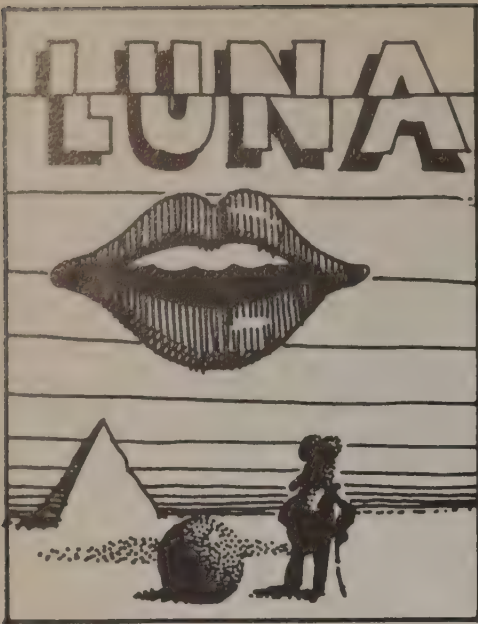


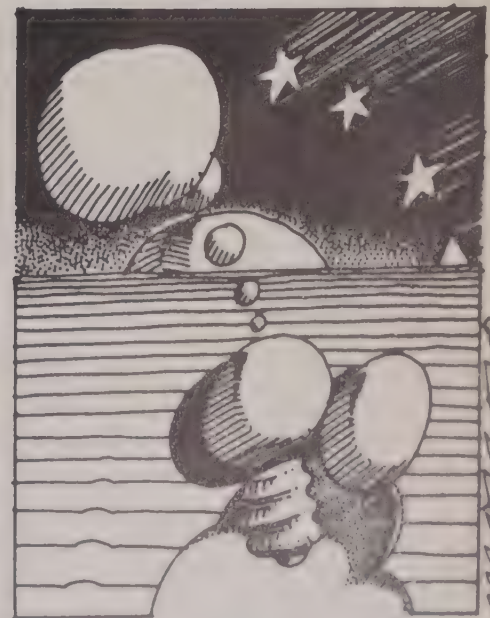
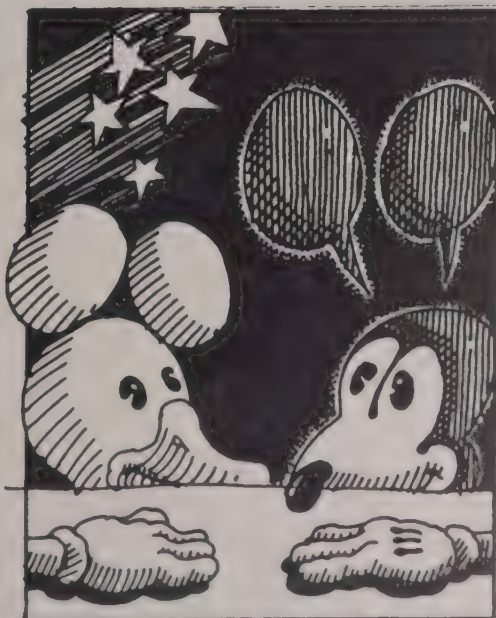
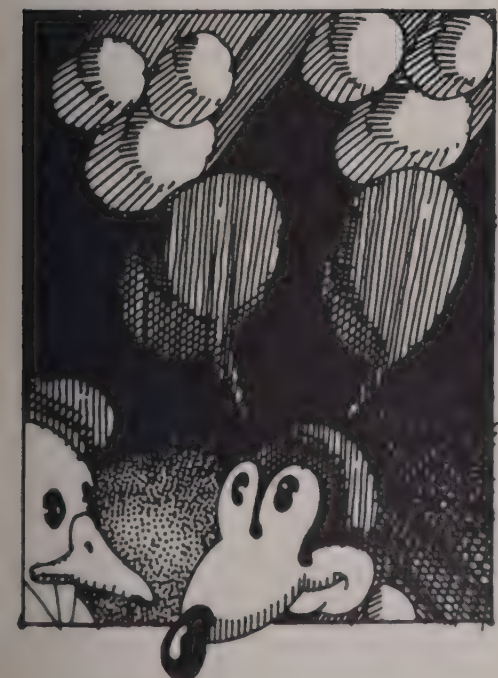
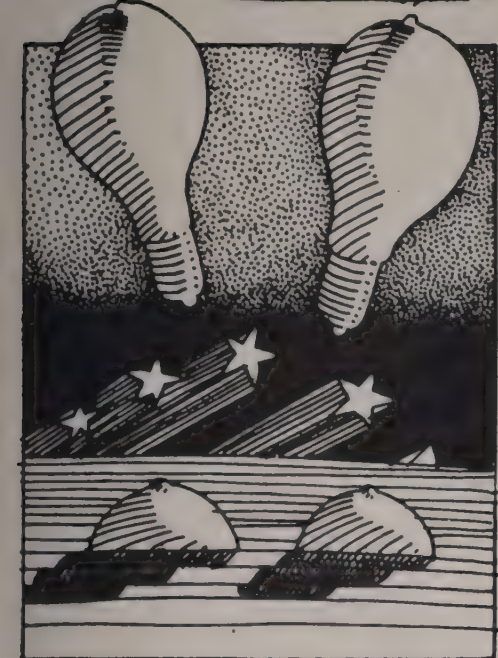
ABOVE: METALLIC BIRD FROM *COLOR* (1971), THE FIRST FULL-LENGTH, FULL-COLOUR UNDERGROUND COMIC.

OPPOSITE: AN EVOCATIVE IMAGE WITH PSYCHEDELIC OVERTONES. THE RISING STARS, PALM TREES AND FLOATING BOULDERS CONNECT IT WITH POP ARTISTS LIKE PETER MAX AND WITH THE HIPPIY MOVEMENT OF THE LATE SIXTIES. FROM: *YELLOW DOG* (1968)

OVERLEAF: MOSCOSO CREATES AN ESOTERIC WORLD OF PLAYFUL ENIGMATIC SHAPES AND CHANGING SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS. WHERE BOUNDARIES MERGE AND OBJECTS TAKE ON DOUBLE MEANINGS AS THEY METAMORPHOSE INTO ONE ANOTHER. *LUNA TOON*, *ZAP 2* (1968)







BIBLIOGRAPHIES

WILL EISNER

The best introduction to Eisner's work is perhaps the classic *Spirit* newspaper strip. Two issues of *Harvey Comics* showcased this character in October 1966 and March 1967. The first weekly strips were reprinted in *The Collector's Spirit* (anon. 1972, now from Warren) covering the period between 1940 and 1941. *The Daily Spirit* (Amsterdam: Real Free Press, 1975) displays an offshoot of the weekly series which is written but only partly drawn by Eisner, and *Spirit: The First 93 Dailies* (anon. 1976, USA) reprints the first story as a full-length book. Two underground comic editions of *The Spirit* were issued by Kitchen Sink (1973) and include some new items, including the covers. In 1974 Warren Publishing in New York began a series of *Spirit* magazines which randomly reprinted strips. The series was abandoned after sixteen bi-monthly issues, but has recently been revived by Kitchen Sink (Krupp) in the same format, with superior reproduction and continuing the Warren numbering (1978). *The Spirit Special* (Warren, 1975) is a cardbound collection of the colour stories from the first of these magazines. Russ Cochrane has published a full-colour portfolio of *Spirit* prints by Eisner (1978), and the Poorhouse Press have reprinted some of the best *Spirit* 'splash' pages in *The Spirit Colouring Book* (1974) along with *Guide to Occult Cooking and Death and Taxes* – two of several odd humour items by Eisner. A large-format, artpaper, full-colour tabloid called *Spirit* was published in Canada (1973) by Oakville Press, and a bound anthology of stories was issued in France (1976) by Les Humanoïdes Associés. *Spirit* was also reprinted in a Belgian magazine called *Tintin* in the early 1970s and in *Les Boucaniers* (Paris: Jean Taoc, 1973). Eisner has also contributed an item called *Preventative Special* for the US Army Maintenance Board and his work has appeared in *Eureka* (Italy: Polygraphico, 1973), *Linus* magazine (Italy) and others. Articles about him are featured in *Steranko's History of Comics* (Supergraphics, 1972), *The Great Comic Book Heroes* (New York: Jules Feiffer, 1965) in which Eisner recalls his early studio days, *The Comic Book Book* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1973) and *The Penguin Book of Comics* (London, 1967). The fanzine *Witzend* also carried an interesting interview with Eisner in the sixth issue (New York: Wonderful Publishing, 1969).

HARVEY KURTZMAN

The best introduction to Kurtzman's work is probably in the original comic book *Mad* and the black and white reprint anthologies subsequently published by Ballantine Books (1954-8 – see Wood). He also appeared in many of the other EC comic titles, including *Two-Fisted Tales* (nos. 18-35, 1950-3) *Front-Line Combat* (nos. 1-15, 1951-4), *Mad* (nos. 1-28, 1952-6) and *Three-D Classics* (no. 1, 1954). His work also appeared in *Help* magazine (nos. 1-26, 1960-5), and many of these strips have been reprinted in such books as *Fast-Acting Help*, *Second Helping* (both Fawcett Publications) and *The Executive's Comic Book* (McFadden Books, 1962). Kurtzman's work, like Eisner's, is also featured by Russ Cochrane in his series of artist portfolios, and Ballantine Books have issued *Humbug Digest* (Nov 1957) which features an anthology of strips from *Humbug* magazine, which Kurtzman edited (nos. 1-11) between 1957 and 1958. In 1959 Ballantine also released *The Jungle Book* (a Kurtzman original), and Fawcett Books published some 'photo-caption' items, including *Beat it Kid You Can't Vote* (1967), *Kurtzman's Fun and Games* (1962) and *Who Said That?* (1962). Since 1962 Kurtzman's strip *Little Annie Fanny* has been appearing in *Playboy* magazine, and an anthology of these strips has been issued in full-colour softbound book format by HMH Publishing, who also issued two issues of a magazine called *Trump* (1957) featuring Kurtzman. Some of his work has also been seen in the underground comix, in particular *Bijou Funnies 8* (Kitchen Sink, 1973), *Snarl 5* (Kitchen Sink, 1974) and his own book *Kurtzman Comix* (Kitchen Sink, 1976). Foreign editions featuring his work include *Strip-Schrift* (nos. 5, 37, 38; Holland, 1972), *Charlie mensuel* (nos. 63, 71, 74, 80, 81; Paris, 1974-5) and *L'Echo des Savanes* (nos. 8, 11, 12; Paris, 1974-5). He has also done commercial work (film) for Scripto ball point pens (1972) and three animated shorts for *Sesame Street* (1974). A comprehensive checklist of his work takes the

form of *The Illustrated Harvey Kurtzman Index* (Glenn Bray, 1976), and interviews with him can be found in both *Inside Comics 2* (New York: Galaxy News Service, 1974) and *Cartoonist's Profiles 26* (Fairfield, June 1975). Magazine features include *Squa Tront 5* and *Crimmer's Journal of the Narrative Arts* (New York, spring 1976). His work is covered in a general sense by the books *A History of Comic Books in America* (New York: Outbridge & Dienstfrey, 1971) and *The Mad World of William Gaines* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1972).

FRANK BELLAMY

Bellamy's first comic work took the form of an advertisement for a toothpaste company and was called *Commando Gibbs v. Dragon Decay*. This was followed by two strips, *Monty Carstairs* and *The Living Desert*, for a comic entitled *Mickey Mouse Weekly* (1953). At this time he was also doing advertising work for the *Daily Telegraph*, *World's Press Agency* and *Ad Weekly*, together with illustrations for *Home Notes*, *Boy's Own Paper*, *Men Only* and *Lilliput* – the last-mentioned including some covers. Following this, Bellamy contributed to a comic called *Swift*; the stories included *Swiss Family Robinson* (1954), *King Arthur* (1955) and *Robin Hood* (1956). In 1957, Bellamy began to work for the legendary *Eagle* and continued to do so until 1966. Stories from *Eagle* of particular note are: *The Happy Warrior* (an illustrated biography of Winston Churchill done in 1958 and reprinted later that year as a full-colour hardback book by Hulton Press, London); *Dan Dare* (vols. 10-11, 1959-60); *Frazier of Africa* (vol. 12, 1961) and *Heros the Spartan* (vol. 13, 1962). Other strips included *The Shepherd King* (1958), *Marco Polo* (1959) and *Montgomery of Alamein* (1962). Examples of these works can be found in the *Best of Eagle* (London: Ebury Press, 1977) and *The World Encyclopedia of Comics* (London: New English Library, 1976). Bellamy's rendition of the television series *Thunderbirds* was published by *TV21* magazine in 1967, and examples of his later work can be seen in issues of *The Sunday Times Magazine* (1969) and *Radio Times* (1970-1). Most of Bellamy's work has never been reprinted, except for the more recent black and white strip *Garth* which was serialised in the *Daily Mirror* beginning in 1971. *The Daily Mirror Book of Garth* (1975) was published in September 1974 and a second annual anthology followed one year later (1976). *Bert Fegg's Nasty Book* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1975) featured two colour pages by Bellamy, and an interesting interview revealing his method of working appeared in a small publication called *Fantasy Advertiser International* (issue 50, Nov 1973). Another good article, by *Radio Times* art editor David Driver, can be found in *The Association of Illustrators Newsletter* (vol. 1, no. 8, Nov/Dec 1975). An obscure and short-lived magazine called *Warrior* contained reprints of *Heros the Spartan* and others in its first four issues (Penwith Publications, 1974-5), and a final strip by Bellamy appeared shortly before his death in *Ally Sloper 1* (Alan Class, 1976). The *Dan Dare* strips from *Eagle* (by Bellamy and other artists) are scheduled for full-colour book reprint by Paper Tiger beginning in September 1978.

RICHARD CORBEN

The best examples of Corben's early work appear in underground titles which include *Fantagor* (nos. 1-4), *Slow Death* (nos. 2-6) and *Skull* (nos. 1-3, 5-6), which were all published by Last Gasp between 1970 and 1973. Prior to this his work can be found in many obscure fanzines, including *Mirkwood Times*, *Anomaly*, *Fantagor*, *RBCC*, *Comic Crusader*, *Photon*, *Mount to the Stars*, *Squa Tront*, *Capa-Alpha*, *Weirdom*, *Infinity* and *The Burroughs Bulletin*. The first significant underground title devoted entirely to Corben was *Tales from the Plague* (Weirdom Publications, Nov 1971) – an offshoot of *Weirdom*, a 'fanzine-turned-underground'. This was followed by two titles displaying novel-length features, *The Story of Rowlf* (1971) and *Grim Wit 1* (1972) – both published by the Rip Off Press. *Grim Wit 2*, following in 1973, is notable for the debut of the *Den* strips in colour, based on Corben's own animated film *Neverwhere*. His first colour strip was published in *Up from the Deep* (Rip Off Press, 1971) on fine artpaper, along with the classic black and white strip, *When Dreams Collide*. Also in 1972, Corben received half a book called *Fever Dreams* (Kitchen Sink) and contributed a fine colour story to *Weird Fantasies* (The LA Comic Book Company). Since then Corben's under-

ground work has been more scarce, although he has recently returned to the Kitchen Sink Company to render covers for *Bizarre Sex*, issues 5 and 6 (1977-8). Other titles to feature his underground work include *Barbarian Comics* and *Death Rattle*. An outstanding fanzine contribution from the early days is a colour strip called *Going Home* which appeared in *Funnyworld 14* (Arkansas, spring 1972) and more recently in *Metal Hurlant 2* (Les Humanoïdes Associés, Paris, 1975). An in-depth interview can be found in the fanzine *Infinity Five* (New York, summer 1973). Much of Corben's early work has now been reprinted in both Europe and America. An *Anthology of Slow Death* (Berkeley: Wingbow Press, 1975) has a new cover by Corben and reprints some of his best stories from that title, plus three of his full-colour covers. *Funnybook* (Nickelodeon Press, 1976) is a hardbound anthology devoted entirely to his early works and includes one of the first strips, *Lame Lem's Love*, printed in colour for the first time. Three similar 'all-Corben' anthologies have appeared in Europe: *U-Comix Sonderband vol. 3* (Holland: UPN, 1974), *Razar le Lache* (anon., Paris, 1976) and Corben (anon., Paris, 1977). Magazines in Europe to reprint his work include: *Ran Tan Plan* (nos. 26-7), *Actuel* (nos. 22-3, 26, 28, 10-11, 15), *L'Echo des Savanes USA Special* (no. 1), *Metal Hurlant* (nos. 1-6) and *Zoom* (no. 31) in France; *Gummi* in Holland; *Blue Jeans* in Portugal; *Oz*, *Nasty Tales*, *Cosmic Comics* and *Hot Gravy* in England. A title called *U/G Comix* in Australia also runs some of the more obscure works. Since 1972 the bulk of Corben's work has appeared in Warren Publishing's line of New York based horror magazines – *Creepy*, *Eerie* and *Vampirella*. Warren have also published five volumes of *Comix International*, a cardbound anthology title showcasing the colour stories from these magazines. The first issue (July 1974) is entirely devoted to Corben and he also features in the other issues. Corben's first full-length graphic novel, *Bloodstar* (Morning Star Press, 1976) is an adaptation of a short story by pulp writer Robert E. Howard, and the fanzine *Hot Stuff* carries other recent works. A portfolio called *Sword and Fantasy* (1970) contains a cover and several black and white plates by Corben. The serial *Den*, in full colour, has appeared in both *Heavy Metal* and *Gummi* magazines, and his latest work, *Mutant World*, is scheduled for publication by Warren in 1978. Two of the best poster examples, *Midnight Battle* and *Anticipation*, are available from Warren Publishing. Corben's three animated films, *Gateway to Terror*, *Labours of Hercules* and *Neverwhere* are often to be seen at conventions.

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH

The majority of Smith's strip work was published by Marvel Comics (New York) from 1968 onwards. Titles include *Daredevil*, *X-Men*, *The Avengers*, *Iron Man*, *Nick Fury: Agent of Shield*, *Astonishing Tales*, *Chamber of Darkness*, *Tower of Shadows* and *Conan the Barbarian*. Of particular note are *Avengers 98-100* (April-June, 1972), a *Doctor Strange* story in *Marvel Premiere 3* (July 1972) and a three-part *Ka-Zar* story in *Astonishing Tales 3-5* (Dec-April, 1970-1), reprinted entire in *Savage Tales Super Annual* (summer 1975). He drew *Conan the Barbarian* in issues 1-15, 19-21, 23 and 24 (Oct 1970 to March 1973), and these are regarded as his most significant achievement in the field, in particular issues 4 (*Tower of the Elephant*); 7 (*The Lurker Within*); 8 (*Keepers of the Crypt*); 9 (*Garden of Fear*); 19 (*Hawks from the Sea*), half of which is printed up from the original pencils; 20 (*Black Hound of Vengeance*) and 24 (*Song of Red Sonja*) which was reprinted in *Marvel Treasury Edition 15* (1977). Issue 22 contains a reprint of the first issue – which now commands absurd prices. Of even greater rarity is *Savage Tales 1* (May 1971) which contained Smith's story *The Frost Giant's Daughter*. A retouched and coloured version of this was reprinted in *Conan the Barbarian 16* (July 1972) and the original version was reprinted in *Savage Sword of Conan 24* (Nov 1977). The excellent *Red Nails* adventure from *Conan the Barbarian 23-4* has been reprinted in full in *Marvel Treasury 4* (1975) and again on fine artpaper as a book, *Les Clous Rouges*, published by Les Humanoïdes Associés (Paris), together with *Black Hound of Vengeance* as a companion volume (pub. Jan and May 1977). Smith's early work in his homeland Britain appeared in *Aspect 2* (1970), *Orpheus 1* (1971) and *The Buster Book*. In recent years Smith's own Gorbliney Press has produced a number of high-quality posters

and prints, plus two books: *Shelf Stuff* (1975) and the retrospective *Gorblimey Press Catalogue* (1976). Portfolios have included *The Tupenny Conan* (1974), *Five Robert E. Howard Characters* (1975), *Fantastic Islands* (1978) and *Excalibur* (1978). A wraparound cover entitled *Artemis and Apollo* appeared on *Star Reach 7* (Jan 1977) together with a one-page advertising feature about him. A critical article appeared in *Mediascene* (Supergraphics, Sep 1975) and an in-depth interview in *Ariel 3* (1978). Other notable work has appeared in the following USA journals – *Vampirella*, *National Lampoon*, *Newsday*, *Esquire* and *Mediascene*.

JEAN GIRAUD

The best-known works of Giraud have been published by Dargaud in France and feature the adventures of a western hero, Lieutenant Blueberry. *The Iron Horse*, *The Man with the Steel Fist*, *The Sioux Trail* and *General Yellow Head* comprise the first great highpoint in the Blueberry series. The four, while complete in themselves, also form a single two hundred page adventure. *The Lost German Mine* and *The Ghost with the Golden Bullets* form another, one hundred page, adventure. The first two adventures in the series, *Fort Navajo* and *Thunder in the West* have been published by Methuen in England (1977). The specialist magazine *Schtroumpf* (no. 25, 1974) devoted an entire issue to the work of Giraud and a large over-sized, softbound portfolio entitled *Gir* was published by Futuropolis in 1974. It contained some humour, science fiction illustrations and a fine strip called *La Deviation*. More recently, *Les Humanoïdes Associés* (of whom Giraud is one part) have been publishing his works under the alternate identity of 'Moebius'. Most renowned of these are the full-colour *Arzach* series in *Metal Hurlant* (reprinted in hardbound book format) and two books entitled *Le Bandard Fou* and *John Watercolour et sa Redingote Qui Tue*. The American offshoot of *Metal Hurlant*, *Heavy Metal*, also reprints these works, including the *Arzach* book. Giraud's work has also appeared in *Pilote*, *L'Echo des Savanes*, *Hari Kiri* in France; *Gummi* in Holland; *Totem*, *Blue Jeans* in Spain; and *Linus* in Italy. A complete book about him, entitled *Mister Gir and Docteur Moebius*, was written by Numa Sadoul and published in Paris by Editions Albin Michel in 1976. An interview also appeared in the first issue of a British magazine *Graphixus* (Feb 1978). In all, there are about forty volumes containing work and information about Giraud – over twenty of them being the *Leutenant Blueberry* series in its original form.

PHILIPPE DRUILLET

The bulk of Druillet's early work appeared in Dargaud's magazine *Pilote* (1969-73). Before 1969 Druillet did some work for a publisher called Lofeld and one of these items is his first major story, *Mystery of the Abyss*. The adventures which were serialized in *Pilote* featured mainly a character named Lone Sloane, which was conceived in the Lofeld works. Many of the strips have been issued by Dargaud in hardbound book format and these include *Les Six Adventures de Lone Sloane*, *Vuzz*, *Yragael ou La Fin des Temps*, *Delirius* and *Urm le Fou*. Current work is now appearing in the new *Pilote* and *Lone Sloane/Delirius* has been published in Britain by Paper Tiger (1978). An autobiographical article On Druillet appeared in *Metal Hurlant 3* (1975), published by *Les Humanoïdes Associés* (of whom he is one part). It is with this company that most of his work since 1974 has been issued – including his two most recent books, *La Nuit et Mirages*, *Heavy Metal*, an American edition of *Metal Hurlant* (which began publishing in May 1977) is currently showcasing these same works. An item called *Totem* (Madrid, 1977) and various issues of *Phenix* also feature Druillet on occasion. One of his earliest known works is a portfolio of drawings based on the writings of fantasy author, Michael Moorcock. This was translated and published in book form by Unicorn Books (Brighton, England) in 1973, entitled *Elric – Return to Melniboné*. Several posters, prints and T-shirt designs have also been issued by *Les Humanoïdes Associés*, and Druillet's work graces sci-fi book covers published by this company and others. In America, an article about him was published in *Mediascene 23* (Supergraphics, 1977). A few obscure postcard designs by Druillet can also be found.

WALLACE WOOD

Early examples of Woods work appear in *Mad*

magazine from 1953 onwards. These colour stories have been reprinted in black and white by Ballantine Books and titles include *The Mad Reader* (Nov 1954), *Mad Strikes Back* (May 1955), *Inside Mad* (Nov 1955), *Utterly Mad* (Oct 1956), and *The Brothers Mad* (Oct 1958). Besides his work in the first twenty-three issues of *Mad*, Wood contributed many war and science-fiction stories to the other EC titles of the time. Eleven of these titles have been faithfully reprinted as *EC Classics Reprints* (New York: East Coast Comix, 1974-6), following the original format. This period in Wood's creative life is discussed with some detail in *A History of Comic Books in America* (New York: Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1971) and *The Mad World of William Gaines* (New York: Lyle Stuart Inc., 1972). Much of the same material is also showcased in *EC Horror Library* (New York: Nostalgia Press, 1971). In the 1960s an outstanding series called *Thunder Agents* (Tower Comics) ran the Wood strip *Dynamo*. This appeared at sporadic intervals between 1965 and 1969. Wood also contributed to his own fanzine called *Witzend* (Wonderful Publishing, New York) and early issues contain interesting 'experimental' works. A superhero comic book dated 1969 and called *Heroes Inc* contained his work, but this only survived one issue. *Witzend* issued a second volume in black and white fanzine format (1976) which continued the characters from the original. A curious tabloid, *Wham-O-Giant*, appeared in 1967 and contained a strip called *Radian* amongst others. Also during the 1960s, Wood's work could be found in *Marvel Comics' Daredevil* (1964) and *Warren Publishing's Creepy* and *Eerie* titles (1964-65). The cream of these are reprinted in *The Best of Creepy* (Tempo Books, Feb 1971). Ballantine Books also released *Tales of the Incredible* (Mar 1965) and *Tomorrow Midnight* (June 1966) which further reprinted the EC sci-fi works. Recent work by Wood has included two issues of *Sally Forth* (1976 – published by Wood himself), *World of the Wizard King* (Amsterdam: Real Free Press, 1974), *Autumn People and Tomorrow Midnight* (Italy: Oscar Mondadori, 1972), *All Star Comics* (DC Comics, 1977) and *Mediascene 10* (Supergraphics, Nov 1974). He is featured in Russ Cochrane's artist portfolio series (Iowa, 1978) and has contributed a strip entitled *My Word* (a strip lampoon of his 1950s material) to an underground comic *Big Apple* (Flo Steinberg, 1975). A strip called *Malice in Wonderland* appears regularly in a New York based sex magazine *National Screw*, and the stories from this, along with other underground items (including his classic *Disney Scene*), have been issued as a bound anthology, *Cons de Fée* (Paris: Editions Du Fromage, 1977). This French company also feature him regularly in their titles *L'Echo des Savanes* and *L'Echo USA Special*. Wood has created numerous advertising items for companies which include Alka Seltzer and Dr. Pepper. He has also produced commercial films, illustrations for 'bubble-gum' cards, science fiction bookcovers and novel interiors. He has created several murals. His latest work is *King of the World* (1978).

ROBERT CRUMB

The best introduction to Crumb's early work would be *The Yum Yum Book* (San Francisco: Scrimshaw Press, 1975), which reprints a lengthy example in full colour. The first underground works for which Crumb is renowned appeared in 1967-8 and include several issues of *Yellow Dog*, *Zap*, *Zam*, *Snatch Comix* and *Bijou Funnies*. In particular, he features in almost all issues of *Zap* and the first two issues were drawn by him entirely. All were published by Apex Novelties and *Snatch*, possibly the most outrageous, has been reprinted as a paperback book, *The Snatch Sampler* (Keith Green, 1977). The *Apex Treasury of Underground Comix* (New York: Link Books, 1974) also reprints the best stories from the early line of Apex titles. In 1968 Viking Press released Crumb's *Head Comix*, and this was re-issued by Ballantine Books in larger format in 1970. Four more undergrounds were released in 1969 entirely by Crumb, namely, *Big Ass* (Rip Off Press), *Hytone* (Apex Novelties), *Mr. Natural* (San Francisco Book Company) and *Motor City* (Rip Off Press). *Fritz the Cat* was also issued by Ballantine Books in New York in the same year. In 1970 came *Despair* and *U Need A* (Print Mint), *Motor City No. 2* (Rip Off Press) and *San Francisco Comic Book* (Apex Novelties), followed by *Mr. Natural 2* (SF Book Co.), *Funny Animals* (Apex) and *Big Ass 2* (Rip Off Press) in 1971. Crumb's first work for Krupp, *Homegrown Funnies*, was also issued in 1971 and

followed soon by *XYZ Comix* in 1972. His most significant underground items since have been *People's Comix* (Golden Gate Publishing, 1972), *Dirty Laundry* (Cartoonists Co-op/Print Mint, 1974), *Black and White* (Apex, 1973), *Artistic Comics* (Golden Gate, 1973) featuring sketchbook extracts, and the various issues of *Arcade* (Print Mint, 1975-6). There was also a small item published by Apex in 1969 called *Jiz Comix*, which is included in *The Snatch Sampler*. A complete checklist of these works appears in *Carload of Comics*, a collection of Crumb's work published by Belier Press in 1976. Other anthologies featuring the work from this period include *Anthology of Slow Death* (Wingnut Press, 1975), *Best of Bijou Funnies* (Link Books, 1975), *Best of The Rip-Off Press* (1973) and *Eat It* (Bellerophon Books, 1974). Interviews with Crumb appear in *Inside Comics I* (New York: Galaxy News Service, spring 1974) and *Promethean Enterprises 5* (1974). Articles about him worthy of note are in *A History of Underground Comix* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow, 1974) by Mark Estren, *Artsy Fartsy Funnies* (Holland: Paranoia, 1974), *Art and Artists* (London, Dec 1969) and *Playboy* magazine (Sep 1967). Prior to 1967, obscure work by Crumb can be found in *Yarrowstalks*, *Help* magazine and others, including a series of 'bubble-gum' cards for the Topps Company. An underground comic called *All Stars* (San Francisco Book Company, 1970) also showcased some of his unpublished covers. Recently, a full colour strip by Crumb appeared in *High Times* magazine (Nov 1977) and his new work currently runs in *Co-Evolution Quarterly* (Point Publishing, 1977-8).

VICTOR MOSCOSO

Victor Moscoso is probably the most obscure of all the artists featured in this volume. The earliest works would probably be the various series of posters he created during 1967-8 for the Avalon and Fillmore ballrooms in San Francisco. These include artwork centred on such bands as Big Brother & The Holding Company, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Steve Miller Blues Band and The Grateful Dead, but all are now extremely rare. Many of these items were showcased in a book entitled *Eureka: The Great Poster Trip* (Print Mint, 1968) but this is long out of print. Most of his comic works did not appear until the 1970s. He had eight sketches in *All Stars* (San Francisco Book Company, 1970) and a comic book of his own, *Color* (Print Mint, 1971). He also illustrated a series of obscure postcards (1970) and in the same year contributed to a poster session called *Sci-Fi Comics* – a large affair published by Print Mint and including the work of Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, Robert Williams and others. A video tape of the proceedings has also been circulated. One item of particular note would be *Trip to Mars*, which follows the comic strip format in poster form. The most prominent comic work can be found in the *Zap Comix* series which is still in print. Two large paperback books, *OM Homemade Comix* and *Gung Ho*, were published by Arcanum Press in Holland in the late sixties and feature reprints of Moscoso's work. *Promethean Enterprises 4 and 5* (California, 1971, 1974) feature items by him – in the latter case a reprint of the epic poster he did for a radio station called KSN in 1971. *Graphis 159* (Switzerland: Graphis Press, 1972) reprinted a fair amount of his early work in a special issue devoted to underground comics, and the same company have released this issue and two others in book form, entitled *Comics: The Art of the Comic Strip* (1972) which also includes some work by Kurtzman, Eisner and Corben. Moscoso's work can also be located in two underground comics called *El Perfecto* (Print Mint, 1973) and *Tales from the Berkeley Con 2* (1974). His work also appeared in the first issue of *Arcade* (Print Mint, 1975) and two issues of a short-lived magazine called *Rip-Off Review* (Rip Off Press, 1972) dated June/July and Aug/Sep. Two British underground papers, *International Times* and *Oz* (1969-73) included a lot of his work and a special issue of *Art and Artists* (Dec 1969) showcased his early work. Substantial coverage is given to him in both *A History of Underground Comics* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow, 1974) and *Artsy Fartsy Funnies* (Holland: Paranoia, 1974). He worked as a staff artist with *Rolling Stone* magazine for a short period in the late sixties and early seventies. The 11 November 1971 issue of *Rolling Stone* carries an interview with him. His work has also been seen in *Playboy* magazine, an underground comic called *Yellow Dog* and advertisements for Levi jeans (1973).

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Today comics are no longer entertainment solely for children. Neither can they be dismissed as inconsequential artifacts of mass media. They have had a far-reaching impact on modern culture, leaving their mark on motion pictures, television, illustration and graphic design as well as on some contemporary art and literature. Combining the dynamics of the visual and narrative arts, they have developed a highly suggestive image language with its own techniques, conventions and aesthetic criteria.

This volume presents portfolios of ten major artists from across the world who have influenced the comic book from its inception to the present day. It discusses their work in detail, highlighting their contributions to the art form, and comparing their distinctive visions. The illustrations have been reproduced wherever possible from the original artwork. The result is a rich display of varied style and approach, and a broadening of the very concept of what constitutes a comic book.

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"The work in this book is so good, it makes me crazy. If you don't know what's happening with comic strip graphics, here is a chance for you ignoramuses to catch up. Eisner, Crumb, Corben, Giraud ... all of the artists in this collection ... the best! - except for Kurtzman. Him, I don't know about,"

— Harvey Kurtzman